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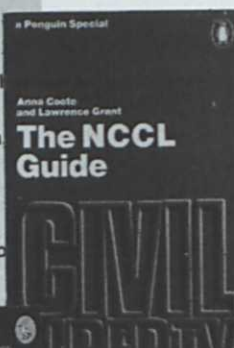
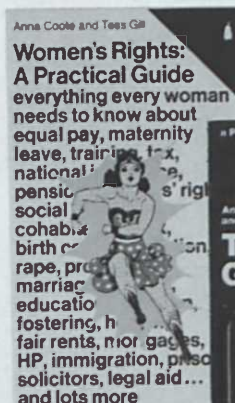
Elsie Burch Donald

Covers everything from second-hand clothes to Rolls Royces, but every shop mentioned gives value for money, whatever you can afford to spend. 75p

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Tom Robbins

An extraordinary first novel about a roadside zoo deep in the Seattle forest, called Captain the Kendrick Memorial Hotdog Wildlife Preserve, where some very strange events take place. Such as the arrival of the mummified corpse of a Very Important Person Indeed, the seduction of a highly rational scientist by a modern madonna named Amanda, and his subsequent conversion to mysticism, and the disappearance of the Corpse, the best drummer in the world and a baboon in a high altitude research balloon. It's beautifully written, truly original and has to be read to be believed. 75p.



'I did it deliberately.

I just got hold of him and burned him on the back of the hand'.

October 1975
ISBN 0306 7971

Front Cover:



Detail of portrait photographs (4' x 8') from the exhibition "Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry". By Kay Hunt, Mary Kelly and Margaret Harrison

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Spare Rib is produced collectively by the following people, some part-time, some full-time: Rose Ades, Sally Doust, Alison Fell, Wisty Hoyland, Laura Margolis, Jill Nicholls, Rosie Parker, Marsha Rowe, Ann Scott, Ann Smith, Rob Smith.

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Distributors: MOORE HARNESS,
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The Case of the Missing Millions

Dear *Spare Rib*,

I was rather puzzled by one of the adverts printed in issue 38 for a boo called *The Women's Handbook* — claiming to be “a sane and practical guide for the modern woman — whether married, separated, divorced or widowed.” What about single women?

I still can't decide whether it's a misprint; and why didn't anyone else notice?

Yours in sisterhood

Val Offech

London SW19

Yes, a number of people wrote to us about this, it was a mistake by the publisher who'd left the 'un' off the 'married'.

Marxist Woman's Own

Dear *Spare Rib*,

I feel I must write to protest about the declining standard of your magazine.

Lately it has become a kind of Marxist *Woman's Own*, and I'm confidently awaiting the day when knitting patterns of the Red Flag appear.

Your slavish adherence to an outdated political theory, formulated by Men for the furtherance of their power under the guise of liberality is an insult to the ideals of the Liberation of Women.

You should be formulating philosophical, political and spiritual truths that spring directly from the experiences and ideas of the Female, not regurgitating the hackneyed doctrines of the left wing Males.

Why don't you dare to be original; let's have more articles that branch out into really revolutionary women's thought instead of your endless whine about existing conditions.

Things will change, but not until women are filled with a new joy, springing from their own possibilities. Not until they look at the future with new eyes, and not until they can recover their powerful self image.

This is the message you should be crying out from your magazine, “Women think for yourselves, you have a mind as well as a body” — a fact forgotten by *Spare Rib* which presents the biological aspect of women ad nauseum while failing to unchain the anguished flesh beneath. Fionna Harnett

Harrow-on-the-Hill

Sex and/or Reproduction

Dear *Spare Rib*,

I wrote a letter to you which I didn't send in which I said that I “couldn't disagree more with your view of what women's lib was about” and went on to lay down the law on matters of sex, love and reproduction. Funny that at the same time when I buy your paper I read it so intensely and even read it walking out of the shop and down the street until I bump into something. The point is that nobody in *Spare Rib* lays down the law on what women should think, feel or do, but all kinds of women write sincerely about their own feelings and doings more searchingly and deeply than was ever done before, STILL...

Unlike most people in the Western world I can't see how it is natural, healthy or good to see sex as separate from having children. To me if I love a man as my man I love sex with him because I am giving myself, and he himself to conceive a child. This makes the deed beautiful and out of this world, and not the sort of thing that can be put into ordinary words. When I read about how to achieve orgasm, and suggested techniques and that kind of thing I am mildly disgusted but mainly puzzled that people can see their bodies as pleasure machines that need mechanical understanding to operate.

I know that most people in our society don't see sex as an integral part of having babies and as a paltry thing without some hope of the end product as I do. Obviously there is no point in trying to argue or ‘prove’ that one view or the other is right or wrong, but I can't deny it, I do feel strongly about this. Perhaps sex is often used to secure and elevate friendship for want of other means, but surely life is full of other things women need to unite for?

I would like to hear an answer (write c/o *Spare Rib*) on the sex thing from someone because no beliefs, even mine, can stand up properly on their own.

Vicky

Birmingham

No Mistaking the Common Enemy

Dear *Spare Rib*,

In the article on “The Amazing Equal Pay Show” in *Spare Rib* No 38, the criticism is made, under the misleading sub-heading ‘Radical Feminism’, that the film sees the principle enemy as sexism rather than capitalism. In fact, the Equal Pay film quite clearly does not say this. Although men are seen obstructing the women's attempts to organise together (which no one could deny does happen on the shopfloor and elsewhere), the

‘Equal Pay Day — 1975’ scene which exposes the con-trick of the Equal Pay Act, makes it unequivocally clear that men are oppressed too — although quantitatively and qualitatively differently from women — and makes no mystery of who the oppressor is. For example, the male trade-unionist, after gloatingly watching the women being shortchanged as they make their long-awaited claims for equal pay, marches up confidently, relieved that he, at least, can be assured of having his wage demands met. They are, in part, but immediately Marvo, the ringmaster of the Capitalist Circus of the film, snatches the wage-rise back from him. ‘Here, I'll have half of that back in rent,’ he says. ‘The cost of living's gone up, thanks to your sort.’ It is at this point that the male worker realises the extent of the con-trick perpetrated on him as well, and joins the women in the physical attack on Marvo, the representative of capital. There is no mistaking who the common enemy is. To have shown the male trade-unionist as sympathetic and understanding throughout would have been simplistic and naive, just as it would have been to show this spontaneous uprising against capital as immediately victorious. Marvo, although momentarily defeated, escapes — to the Common Market. If we are really going to defeat capitalism and sexism we must be aware of their wily manoeuvres and the ways in which they work both interdependently and autonomously. But to fault the film for either confusing the two or neglecting the one is to miss one of the central points of the film.

The article's assumption of the separateness of women's waged work outside the home and unwaged work in the home seems to me not only artificial but to prevent an understanding of the contradictions working against women in their struggle for power. One of the scenes chosen to exemplify this in the article is the women's meeting in the factory where they begin to organise their struggle for equal pay. This meeting is loosely based, as is much of the film, on the 1968 strike by women workers at Ford's. The article seems to criticise the film for not rigidly sticking to the ‘facts’, but the film in no way sets out to do this, recognising the impossibility of trying to document any situation ‘objectively’. On the other hand, “The Amazing Equal Pay Show” does try to explore the emotional contradictions which the article seems to dismiss. ‘For the Ford women,’ the article says, ‘making the connection with women workers at other Ford factories was essential, and more difficult than coping with men at

home’, and then goes on to quote Rose Boland: “On the whole, during the three weeks we were on strike, all the girls worked hard and they all stuck together. In fact, I don't think I saw my husband or son during the whole three weeks. They never knew whether I was in or out.” This is illuminating as one woman's particular experience. But the article then goes on to say of this experience, ‘So she did not have to tell them to go away and leave her on her own’ — which the women organising the Equal Pay film do. The article appears to criticise the film for not matching detail for detail one woman's experience (a criticism which is later levelled at both the Women's Film Group and the Women's Theatre Group: ‘generalising from the particular’). In doing so, it denies the fact that other women — and perhaps inwardly all women — experience things differently, and are bound together by a destructive, unconscious guilt that to pursue their own interests means by definition to neglect their families. Women do have responsibilities at home, and the emotional relationship to them is highly complex. This means that even if in many cases men don't physically demand that their wives return home, the women feel the weight of the emotional demands made on them by their very roles of girlfriends, wives and mothers, questioning and blaming themselves for not behaving like ‘real women’. The flame of maternal instinct hasn't been fanned by capitalist ideology all these years for nothing. To ignore the tension in this situation is to underestimate the enormity of the struggle the women's movement is waging. When the husbands in the film charge onto the shopfloor replete with crying babies who the women are expected to feel guilty about, they are not necessarily duplicating the exact nature of the forces working against women, they are symbolising the demands made on women to sacrifice themselves, give up their demands, deny their own needs. I'd also like to mention that this scene in the film is invariably greeted with a ‘laugh of recognition’ which the article has previously set forth in the section on ‘Brecht and Political Cinema’ as a criterion for measuring ‘the accuracy of the realism presented’.

Yours in sisterhood

Barbara Evans

The London Women's Film Group

Rejecting Realist Film-making

Dear *Spare Rib*,

As a member of the collective who



made "The Amazing Equal Pay Show" I would like to contribute to the debate initiated by Marsha Rowe's long article about the film in issue 38.

I think the article says as much about Marsha's, and a great many other people's, notions and expectations of political cinema as it says about the film. To me the article seems an implicit argument for 'realist' film-making rather than a constructive critique of a film which explicitly rejects this notion and sets out in another direction. An understanding of the film depends on an acceptance of symbolism and other techniques which depart from 'realist' conventions. The film doesn't attempt to duplicate 'reality' on celluloid. Firstly this is impossible since the world presents a different 'reality' to different people and secondly, the process of film-making itself creates meaning. The group has in the past made several black and white 'realist' documentaries and it was very largely our experience of audience's responses to these that made us want to make a different kind of film. Since this meant doing something that doesn't fit in with the documentary realist traditions of British political cinema it is not surprising that the film is not immediately acceptable to many people; tho' a lot of people who have seen the film have liked it and understood our intentions.

The point I particularly want to clear up is the statement "the film isolated the experience of sexism totally in the body of Poodle and therefore carried it away from women's daily lives, from women in the film and from women in the audience." I agree that Poodle is the film's main device for representing sexism but I don't think this necessarily means that it isolates the experience of sexism. It means that the film can generalise from individual experiences of sexism and present an analysis of the ways in which sexism contributes to the maintenance of capitalism, as well as presenting examples of sexism that the audience can identify with. After all sexism is more than the degradation of women's bodies

and sexuality — the subjective experience of which permeates our everyday lives. It is also a deeply rooted system of power relationships which doesn't neatly overlap the set of power relations which have been identified as characterising capitalism. For instance, where the film shows a women's union meeting being interrupted by a band of irate husbands plus crying babies, mops, irons, etc and want their wives to return home to their place and leave the strike meeting, this is a clear statement that sexism can divide the working class. In the "Controversy" scene (a satirised Panorama type show) the film pinpoints the ways in which the sexist attitudes of the male interviewer allows him to dismiss the housewife he is interviewing as trivial. Housewives are trivialised and the meaning of domestic labour concealed. This scene can also be seen as a hint at the media's role in

perpetuating sexism. This point is made again in relation to Hollywood cinema and its use of women — in one scene stills of Jean Harlow and Marilyn Monroe are intercut with Poodle, in the role of a photographic model at the disposal of Marvo's camera (Marvo is the film's symbol for capitalism) dancing and posing sexily to "You Are My Sunshine". This scene is also pointing out the advantages of diverting workers with a "bit of tits and teeth". The film also gives an example of the way capitalism is dependent on sexism to sell — in a mock TV commercial, apparently (as usual) a woman's body is being advertised but it transpires she is merely a vehicle for interesting viewers in "Vulva — the car of tomorrow TONIGHT". And at the end of the film where Marvo is losing his grip he realises his need for Poodle "now, more than ever before"

In sisterhood
Fran McLean
London Women's Film Group

Morning Star Caricatured

Dear *Spare Rib*,
In Marsha Rowe's "The Art of Women's Liberation Propaganda" (No 38), which closely examined the film of "The Amazing Equal Pay Show", she says of the characterisations "These caricatures seem to have begun from something not quite accurate because of an early lack of communication, and grown into something quite off the mark". Ms Rowe also comments that the film has "been dismissed by some" women trade unionists already.

I suggest one contributory factor to this dismissal, and an instance of being "not quite accurate", is the decision to have the male chauvinist shop steward reading a copy of the *Morning Star*, the Communist daily newspaper. This decision would surely only have relevance if the theatre group and film-makers were portraying the role of Marxist males in the trade unions. Then it would also be possible to have someone reading one or other organ of the Trotskyist press, like *Socialist Worker*, as all the Marxist parties and groups in Britain are affected by male chauvinist attitudes. Communists don't have the copyright.

Ms Rowe referred to Sarah Benton's extremely important report on discrimination for ACTT, and the importance of the discussion at this year's women's TUC. The *Star* gave both substantial coverage (indeed Ms Benton wrote a feature article for the *Star* based on her report).

Perhaps, when looking for caricatures, an unfortunate reader of *The Sun* might be represented, given that paper's penchant for female nakedness in daily doses of considerable proportions, which permeates the roots of its reactionary politics. Many women in the trade union movement have been prepared to congratulate and welcome the *Star*, which although not perfect, reports their disputes and takes an editorial line of solidarity. It is a pity that such an important step forward as the London Women's Film Group, is marred by "something not quite accurate", which, I know

has already dissuaded a number of women trade unionists from hiring or associating with the film.

Yours sincerely
Bob Campbell
Features Editor
Morning Star

An Insulting Gesture

Dear *Spare Rib*,
It is difficult to reply to an article as confused and destructive as Marsha Rowe's look at "the Art of Women's Liberation Propaganda" in Issue 38. Fortunately for the reader we do not have seven pages at our disposal to defend point by point the targets of her attack. However we do feel that we must reply to her allegation that the "confusions" she observes in our film are "an ignorant and insulting gesture instead of expressing solidarity between women".

As two women who worked with the original women's theatre group and then with the film group we know the time and work expended by women on "The Amazing Equal Pay Show" and we were deeply hurt to read the type of article in a feminist magazine which might be more appropriate to a review made by a Sunday paper personality critic ("When I fell asleep" etc.).

We would have hoped that a review in *Spare Rib* would have recognized the positive aspects, and validated the experience, of women working collectively and independently on what could only be seen as a difficult and challenging project — a full length film.

Having made a token theoretical

gesture towards the difficulties faced by women learning and teaching skills to which traditionally only men have had access, Marsha then wades in with all her guns blazing, pouncing on any available ammunition (and frequently trotting out her sidekick — the authentic working class voice of "a woman trade unionist") to make her over-riding point, i.e., the film was a waste of time.

If we were to take Marsha's article seriously, women like us, with our (yes, wait for it) working class background of traditional diffidence would be reluctant to work on another film. Contrary to Marsha's assumptions we are not all middle class Utopian radical feminists, but through the women's movement we have gained the necessary confidence to experiment.

In spite of Marsha's lip service to the film's intended use as a stimulus to argument and discussion rather than for consumption as a finished product she has chosen to write her article individualistically. It would have been more interesting to read a transcript of the discussion and argument following a screening of the film than Marsha's lengthily indulgent personal experience of seeing it.

Marsha seems to have gone to the cinema with a preconception of the film as presenting a neatly packaged, 50 minute answer to the problem of the relation of socialism to feminism. Not surprisingly, she didn't find it. ▶▶

Lin Layram
Jean Taylor

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SHORTLIST

Please send any information to Jill Nicholls, Shortlist, Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh St, London W1A 4XS.

medical staff, when a woman decides to have her baby in hospital, (3) no phasing out of domiciliary midwifery. Contact them at 140 Adelaide Ave, Brockley, London SE4.

events

International Tribunal

Disco/benefit to raise money to send women with personal experience of suffering in the areas of abortion, wife battering and legal dependence to the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women. On October 3 at 8pm at the London School of Economics, St Clements Building, Houghton St, London WC2. Entrance 30p.

Women Workers Conference

October 4 at 9.15 in May Place Hall, Basingstoke, Hants. Women welcome from trade union branches, women's groups, labour wards, etc. Registration: union £1 per delegate, other organisations 75p, observers (female and male) 40p. Creche provided, and a performance of *Seeing Red* by Recreation Ground. For details contact the Women's Rights Group, 209 Old Worting Rd, Basingstoke, Hants.

Working Women's Charter

Disco on October 4, 7.30-12.30, at the Sols Arms, 77 Hampstead Rd, London NW1 (2 mins. Euston Square tube). Bring all your friends (men welcome) to this special fund-raising event for the Working Women's Charter Campaign.

Free Speech Rally

On the question of free speech on Ireland - i.e. the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the possibility of permanent repressive legislation. On October 5 in London, but details are not yet certain - contact the British Peace Committee, 84 Claverton Square, London SW1 (01-834 0768).

Merseyside Solidarity

Day conference on solidarity with the struggles of women throughout the world. Speakers from Portugal, Chile (Carmen Castillo from the MIR), MIR, Ireland and Vietnam. Workshops all afternoon. Creche provided. On October 5, 10.30-4.00, at SOGAT offices, 254 County Rd, Liverpool 4. Registration 25p.

Women and Crime

New group organised by Radical Alternatives to Prison starts on October 7 with a discussion on rape, with Tess Gill and women from the Rape Crisis Centre. Then weekly meetings, on Tuesdays at 7pm in the Polytechnic of Central London, on battered women, women and alcohol, prostitution, prisoners. Details from RAP, Eastbourne House, Bullards Place, London E2 (01-981 0041).

Wales Conference

The next Wales Women's Liberation Conference is to be held in Swansea October 11-12. More details from the Swansea Women's Liberation

Group, 79 Brokesby Rd, Bonymaen, Swansea, Glam. There'll be workshops, a social on Saturday evening, and if funds stretch to it, a film as well. Ideas for the agenda to that address as soon as possible.

Plans for a Women's Newspaper

The third one-day conference is on October 11 in Manchester. Come even if you missed the first two. Contact Joan, Essex Rd Women's Centre, 108 Essex Rd, London N1 for details.

Lancaster Women's Aid

Lancaster Women's Liberation have just got a building for a battered women's refuge and new women's centre, 'leased' to them by the Council on condition that they do all the structural repairs, decorating, etc., and meet the requirements of the fire regulations. This involves a large amount of money which they haven't got. The main problem is the fire regulations: they need 12 fire doors (£15 each new), one fire escape, an emergency lighting



From *Women and Social Security*

NAC Conference

To discuss future of the campaign, October 18-19 starting 11am at Imperial College, Exhibition Rd, London SW7. Registration £1; claimants, students, single parents 50p. All welcome. Creche provided. Public meeting October 18 evening in Central Hall, Westminster - contact NAC for details at their new address, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1 (01-485 4303).

Plans for Newcastle

The next National Women's Liberation Conference is to be held in Newcastle at Easter '76. There will be a planning meeting on October 25 at noon in Newcastle. Two delegates are invited from each group. Accommodation and creche are available if necessary. 50p charge covers tea and an evening social. For details contact the Newcastle Women's Liberation Group, c/o 46 Simonside Terrace, Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne 6.

projects

Women's Collective on Ireland

Believes that civil war is about to break out in Northern Ireland which will mean that the Catholic ghetto will face direct attacks and extended siege. They'd like to launch a campaign of support within the women's movement for the beleaguered Catholic population. They want to come to your group to talk about the political issues. They have a slide-show, exhibition and music. Support means clothes, food and money. Contact the collective c/o News from Women's Liberation, 20b Batoum Gdns, London W6 (01-226 7615).

system, fire proofing for corridor walls and cellar ceiling. They would welcome donations, news of available secondhand or cheap materials and practical advice. Please send anything you can to Lancaster Women's Liberation, c/o 1 Perth St, Lancaster, Lancs.

Women's Research Centre

Has a meeting with a speaker every other Friday (October 3, 17, etc), starting at 7-7.30 at the Richardson Institute, 158 North Gower St, London NW1 (phone 01-388 0882 on Tuesday and Thursday). The library shelves are filling up slowly, but they need more books, pamphlets, leaflets, periodicals - anything you have found useful in research on women. Also copies of your research papers, articles, essays, etc., published or unpublished. Subscribe to their newsletter to keep informed, and send an sae with any query.

campaigns

NAC

Do you live/work in Central London? Some women want to form a Central London NAC group, to organise opposition to the Abortion (Amendment) Bill. Contact 01-435 1902.

Childbirth

Should we extend the Abortion Campaign, the aim of which is to win the right of women to control their own bodies, to the freedom to decide if, when, where and in what manner we will give birth? An informal "childbirth campaign" group suggests we demand (1) free contraception and abortion on demand, (2) no artificial induction of and medical interference in normal births for the convenience of the

Gay Workers

"The Gay Working People's Collective would welcome contributions (financial help too) from gay women and men about any aspects of their working lives, difficult or successful, which we could put over to other gay people. (Not that you can clock off from being oppressed.) Particularly from women who feel that kiss-ins and legal wrangling over age of consent by CHE have little relevance to their situation (lesbian mothers etc). Please send any information you think might be useful to the Gay Information Centre, 153a

Woodhouse Lane, Leeds (0532-39071 ext 57). To further discussion within the gay movement it is vital that not only the theoreticians have a say as to how to 'build the campaign' but that we draw on the day-to-day experience of gays in and around the workplace."

CHE

The Campaign for Homosexual Equality wants society to accept homosexual and bisexual people as fully entitled to lead their lives openly. So it campaigns for social and legal equality between all women and men, and the reform of the laws which deny this equality. They've drafted their own Sexual Offences Bill, and published a pamphlet *No Offence: The Case for Homosexual Equality at Law* by Bob Sturgess, 50p inc postage from CHE, 28 Kennedy St, Manchester M2 4BG (061-228 1985).

Working Mothers

The Working Mothers Action Group is interested in the needs of working mothers - economic, medical and legal. Contact Barbara Ford, 25 Milton Rd, London N6 (01-340 0200 evenings).

pamphlets

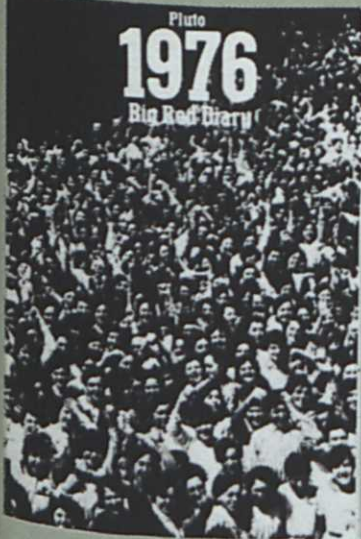
Women and Social Security

A handbook by women in the Claimants Union, incorporating material from *The Unsupported Mothers Handbook*. The Claimants Union Movement demands the right of a guaranteed adequate income to each individual with no means test and no age limit (at present no one under 16 can claim, which is difficult for girls under 16 who get pregnant or who leave home to live with

relatives or friends). Women are not treated as individuals by the social security system but as mere 'dependants' on men. The Government's sex discrimination legislation specifically omits the vast area of social security. Yet two thirds of supplementary benefit claimants are women, and that doesn't include women whose husbands or 'cohabitants' claim for them as 'dependants'. Women claim family allowances, family income supplements, sickness benefit, widow's pensions, many other allowances — the handbook looks at all these areas, pointing out discrimination, attacking the cohabitation rule and sex-snooping. It tells you how to claim, how much you should get, how to appeal. In fact it covers so much that it's superficial in parts. It makes sweeping assertions — "We know this is all lies" — which it doesn't back up, so if you don't agree, you're not persuaded. Basically though a very useful and lively handbook, with lots of cartoons, and contact addresses for regional claimants unions. Available from East London Claimants Union, Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Rd, London E1 at 30p for claimants, and 50p to others, plus 15p postage.

Portugal: A Blaze of Freedom
The best thing I've read on Portugal since the April 25 coup, with a good (though brief) section on women. Published by Big Flame; available for 30p inc postage from 632 Bookshop, 632 Bristol Rd, Birmingham 29.

Women's Diary
The Pluto Press Big Red Diary for 1976 is about women. It begins with summaries of loopholes in the Equal Pay Act, women's rights at work, nurseries, housing, pensions and supplementary benefits — all providing useful information for arguing with sexists of all varieties.



The year starts optimistically. January opens with John Berger on the European nude and the launching of *The Lily* in 1894 in New York — "the first paper to be owned, edited, and published by a woman". Mary Wollstonecraft finishes writing the *Vindication* on January 3 1792. January 9 1908 and Simone de Beauvoir is born. The words of the song 'Bread and Roses', inspired by

a mill girls' strike in 1912 in the USA, are printed with January 31.

But there are bizarre moments. Why does a Big Red Diary mention that Susan Shaw and Edna Stokes become the first female members of the Stock Exchange on March 26 1973? There is also ambiguity. March 24 1897: "Wilhelm Reich born. 'i became his wife, secretary and general factotum' Ilse Ollendorf Reich". It's not clear whether it's Reich's murky history that's up for scrutiny or the importance of his work.

Most moving for me were August 4 1962: "Marilyn Monroe dies from an overdose. 'I never quite understood it, the sex symbol'," and September 26 1937: "Bessie Smith bleeds to death after a car accident when a hospital wouldn't take her because she was black." This diary will haunt and inspire you all through the year.

£1 through *Spare Rib*, coupon p.37.

Ann Scott

Women in Architecture

Ignore the nervous disclaimers which pepper the women's issue of *Architectural Design* ("For the most part Enid doesn't believe that sex is an issue in architecture") and the magazine is informative and often constructively critical of the profession.

The articles are historical (on women theorists and on the development of the home as woman trap), personal (women architects, landscape designers and students talking about their life and work), and descriptive (on buildings and projects by women). Articles describing the alternatives women are suggesting or developing in the face of a man-designed world include Helen Sachs' excellent "Women's Self Help", which contrasts with accounts of how to be an ace architect and wife and mother simultaneously.

Women as consumers are also considered in the magazine: Irene Breughal and Adah Kay attack planners' blindness to women's needs, concluding that planners are constrained in their activity by the values of society at large. Values enshrined in the design policies of official bodies such as the Dept. of the Environment, described by Maureen Taylor. Values confronted by architects designing flat complexes for single parents. An article on Nina West Homes tells of running battles with local authorities, who even objected to a screen being installed in the bedsit "because it might encourage the mother to sleep with men."

"Women in Architecture", *Architectural Design* Vol XLV, 75p from The Standard Catalogue Co Ltd, 26 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1.

Rosie Parker

Gallery

A poetry magazine with pictures. Second issue out now, price 40p from 15a Alexandra Mansions, West End Lane, London NW6. They want Gallery 3 to be a special women's issue "in honour of International Women's Year" so they want your poems (by the end of September) and artwork (by the end of October).

arts



Romantic Lovers — one of the painted and glazed sculptures by Cathy Ward showing at the Bradford Metropolitan Council Manor House Museum and Art Gallery, Ilkley, Yorks, from September 18–October 12, 10–5 seven days a week. There was an article by and about her in *Spare Rib* 32.

Indian Women Weavers

I'm sure that the Navajo blankets will be the most stunning things in the exhibition of 2,000 years of North American Indian Art which opens in London on October 7. Exhibits will range from contemporary crafts to objects of 1,500 BC unearthed in Ohio.

The lives and work of the Navajo women weavers show how people's position in society affects the status of their products. The Navajo women, though not the leaders of their society, had considerable control over their own lives. The tribe is organised in extended family units around female bonds — a man moves in with his wife's family when he

marries. Authority within the family is egalitarian though particular power rests with the parents or widowed mothers.

The women weavers use no patterns. Weaving was thought to be divinely inspired by a "muse" called the Spider Woman. In other words, the status of the weavers approximated to that of the artist in our society rather than the craftswoman. The blankets were valued as expressions of the special power of the makers. And they were considered to confer status and presence on the people who wore them.

2,000 Years of North American Indian Art, Hayward Gallery, London, October 7–January 16.

Rosie Parker

Women's Struggle Notes

Compiled by women in Big Flame. "Women's Struggle Notes comes out of an urgent need to understand and build the class struggle of women which is ignored by the bourgeois press, hidden by the unions and relegated to a secondary place by the more "traditional" left groups. Details of struggles all over the country round housing, pay, unemployment, abortion, hospitals; prices. *Struggle Notes* are much improved by more analysis than they had at first — the latest issue, No 5, which covers June/August, has a long article from Merseyside Big Flame about their experience of the housing struggle on Tower Hill.

10p plus some postage from 13 Tadmor St, London W12. Subscribe to be sure of a regular copy. Any information about women organising in your area to that address.

Korea Newsletter

After Vietnam, Korea? The people who produce *Alternative Press Digest* are worried by the American presence in Korea, afraid it will be the next battleground in SE Asia. So they are reprinting every fortnight the *Korea Newsletter*, published in Tokyo by the Korean Resistance. Send 10p or £1.20 (inc postage) for 12 issues c/o APD, 22 Dane Rd, Margate, Kent.

Children's Stories

People in and around the collective that runs Partisan Books, Luton, have written some anti-sexist children's stories that they've published on typewritten, duplicated sheets with sketches.

The best are humorous 'real-life' stories of self-help politics — *Doughnuts* is really good, about schoolchildren refusing to pay higher fares on the new one-man buses; *Linda and the Food Co-op* is about local people organising together against rising prices in the supermarket ("Last week eggs were 14p, now they're 24p — have the chickens been given a wage increase?").

The others try to subvert sex-role/job definitions — *Princess Elvira and the Magical Multi-Storey Car Park*, *Feminist Folk Tales* and *Project Baby* (a reprint from *Ms*, quite funny, but encouraging the myth of the liberated superperson). All available from Partisan Books, 34 Dallow Rd, Luton, Beds., for 5p each plus postage.

Just Another Truckstop

The 1975 supplement to the *Truckers' Bible* 1974. The state of the dope laws all over the world — and the state of the prisons. 50p from Release, 1 Elgin Ave, London W9. £1 for the two together.

Womanpower sewing machines

Dear *Spare Rib*,
I am an artist – I make things with fabric, and have owned sewing machines for years. In January this year I decided to buy myself a new treadle sewing machine, but apparently there is 'no demand whatsoever' for a treadle machine. Have you ever tried using anything heavier than tweed in an electric machine? The motor simply refuses to budge. The initial burst of power in an electric machine frequently breaks the thread or needle or both. They refuse to sew any sort of lumps in the materials and cost a fortune in servicing.

With a treadle machine using 'womanpower' I've sewed carpets, thick canvas for scenery, wall hangings – I've sewed this rope, cardboard and a multitude of other things. I don't think I'm the only person who would like a treadle machine that would embroider, that was modern with all those nice attachments electric ones have.

If anyone else wants a modern treadle machine would they write to Singer and tell them there is a demand.

Sincerely
Maggi Jo Norton
Northwood
Middlesex



My Girl Bill

Dear *Spare Rib*,
In the article "I love 'em and leave 'em" by Liz Waugh and Terry Goddard (No. 38) you are absolutely right about the record "My Girl Bill". I am gay myself and I find the record pernicious yet one constantly hears it played in the gay bars and clubs. We have a long way to go yet in terms of self-oppression. It will be interesting to see how much publicity is given to Valentino's "I Was Born This Way". No matter how one may dispute the above statement as to the aetiology of gayness, the record is an improvement on "My Girl Bill" if only for its explicitness. But I think you are very wrong about Bowie. If anyone deserves the little pig of the year then Bowie should be awarded it for his interview in *The Sunday Times* (July 25). Yours sororally
P McEwen
Manchester

Acid Test Bullshit

Dear *Spare Rib*,
"Can you imagine", asked Liz Waugh and Terry Goddard (No. 38), "a tremulous young man dramatically declaiming (a la Dusty) 'You gotta choose the clothes you wear/just for her/ Do the things she likes to do/Wear your hair just for her...'"

Those of us who can remember back into the mists of July 1964 don't have to imagine. Just check your NME chart, gang, at No 13 – "Wishing and Hoping" by the fab Merseybeats containing just those very words.

I think that the Sexist Lyric Acid Test (turn it round, could a woman sing it, etc.) is bullshit – but not because they fell into that little trap. It's because pop isn't Eng. Litt. The lyrics scarcely matter. They're part of the sound, and it's the sound that's the magic and myth about pop music.

If listening to the lyrics can "shock you out of your enjoyment", then stop treating pop music like poetry, it's not – it's 20th Century Sound and Vision on all channels. It's a mirror for attitudes and flashness and silliness; and that's why the way Elvis was standing when he sang "Blue Suede Shoes" matters more than the worthy witterings of Family or Joni Mitchell.

The reason this is important has to do with the way that people react to the culture surrounding them. The shudder of excitement I got when I first heard "Please Please Me" – why a girl's reaction might be different, for a different record – what things in the way she was brought up made that difference happen – I suspect this sort of thing is what should be the Women's Movement's concern about pop. Not 6th form essay writing which analyses word-by-word some poor tunesmith's attempt to find words that would rhyme – and certainly not research that overlooks the Role of the Merseybeats in Western Civilisation.

Keep on bumpin'
Martin Crookston
London SW11

Mme Minh and Vietnam

Dear *Spare Rib*,
Even though I too deplore 'American Imperialism' and the Vietnam war, the grinning Mme Minh on your cover makes my blood run cold, while the nice, co-operative, fellow-traveller approach of the interviewer who elicits the First Lady's praiseworthy remarks on Women's Liberation makes my blood boil.

Mme Minh makes much of the clean new regime's abolition of prostitution. I would suggest, in all bitterness, that the worst form of prostitution is to be forced to sell one's soul to the regime, prostitute one's art for it, betray one's friends and one's convictions in order to survive in it – all of which, as Mme Minh well knows, is more or less routine under any Communist regime; and the present one in Vietnam is proving no exception.

Having read of the puritanical regulations concerning make-up, dress, and sexual conduct instituted by the conquerors, and also having absorbed the wonderful news that now women too get to be drafted as soldiers, I would say the 'liberating' regime represents a more sinister force of repression than the corrupt 'imperialist' one, which at least still allowed a woman some freedom of choice as to whether or not she would be a hooker (happy or otherwise), or a soldier, or a plain or fancy dresser, with or without Western Imperialist make-up. Though the latter may seem trivial, it is not when viewed as part of the process whereby every Communist regime exerts its grim censorship and regimentation, 're-educating' those who do not fit in (as Mme Minh proposes to do with the happy hookers), and in general replacing with the freedom to obey, the freedom to choose from a variety of life-styles.

Having read of the mass evictions by the 'liberating' armies, and the bizarre new justice whereby the liberators execute not only South Vietnamese army officers but also their wives; having seen heartrending photos of Saigon youths being executed for theft, without a trial, on the street, by impromptu firing squads composed of the 'liberating' soldiers, I would say the question of Women's Liberation becomes totally submerged. When oppression reaches a certain degree, it levels the sexes. The issue of women's rights can never be properly considered as such, in the face of appalling violations of the human rights of people in general. Given the context of her political beliefs, and her country's present situation, there is more than a little bad faith, not to mention absurdity, in Mme Minh's dictum: "So long as women are not free, the people are not free." For the fact is, whether we are talking about negro slaves, Jews under Hitler, Russians under Stalin, Ugandans under Amin, or the newly 'liberated' people of South Vietnam, so long as the people are not free, women cannot even begin to think about their freedom.

Sincerely
Ann Kirby
Bath

Women and the EEC

Dear *Spare Rib*,
The EEC has drafted a law covering the whole of the Common Market and granting equality to women in job opportunities, training, promotion, working conditions, dismissal and social security. The paper describes the position of working women; our concentration in the tertiary sector and in the least skilled jobs, the inadequate training, the effect of motherhood on our careers, promotion problems and narrow career prospects, and the discrimination against us as regards terms of work and social security. On each of these points it proposes action by the nine member countries, and I shall be interested to see if our government acts on these proposals or if they exercise our precious right of veto.

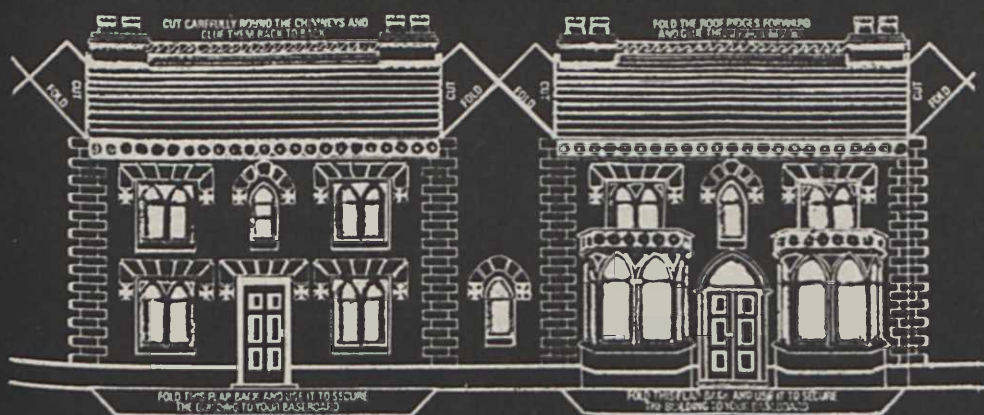
The EEC paper provides an appeal system for anyone who feels herself wronged through non-application of the principle of equal treatment, and offers protection against dismissal etc for a worker who complains about discrimination.

The EEC has asked its members to try harder to find and forward to it requests for aid (money) from EEC funds for projects to promote the employment of women, leading to pilot schemes specifically designed for women. It also intends to fund publicity on the special problems that women face. It is, however, up to the governments to forward projects for this aid, and so far virtually nothing has been forwarded from the UK. This draft law consolidates the ruling on equal pay for equal work which the EEC adopted on 10 February 1975.

It is now up to individual governments to implement the principles and machinery which they have formally endorsed, and pressure them to do so in the shape of letters from us to Ministers and MPs can only help.

The UK government is still entirely free to make up its own mind whether or not to do something about the Finer Report, abortion, rape, sexually equal public appointments, etc. Liaison with other countries might help us. We are the poorer and the older sex, we are the most exploited workers and are particularly burdened financially by children. *Legal minimum standards are of more importance to us than to men as the bare minimum is what we so often get.* Our country spends less of its gross national product on social security than any other EEC country besides Ireland, has poorer family allowances, poorer pensions in relation to earnings, and *only* the UK has no legal minimum wage or legal paid holiday entitlement. Yours in sisterhood
Eleanore Sorensen
1030 Brussels
PS. Remember that Leyland subsidy figure – one million pounds a day for the next eight years – it is useful to have it to hand when you are told that the Government simply cannot afford day nurseries, homes for battered wives, abolition of sex snoopers, etc.

Woman and Home



When a little girl plays lovingly with her doll's house, and painstakingly shifts tiny plastic chairs and tinier saucepans around in it, she's preparing, with the blessing of her parents and society, to pour much of her energy, creativity, and identity into making a home of her own. In her first reader she meets a family which lives in a model home which has many rooms through which a model mother moves, competent and smiling, from task to task.

So what are her real prospects of ever getting this? The vision she carries in her head of woman secure in her home can become a reality only under two conditions – if she is wealthy enough to buy her own property, or opts for marriage and family and sticks to it through thick and thin. Of course money buys the right to choose one's lifestyle along with the farmhouse or Georgian Terrace, but this is a privilege open to very few women, and it is the reality which faces the mass of women I want to write about. Apart from all the persuasive rubbish in our heads about Ideal Homes and Ideal Homemaking – a roof, shelter, a few yards of territory are powerful, deeply felt needs. The thought of being without them stirs up more fear and insecurity than almost anything else – certainly more than the prospect of being out of work, for instance.

From women workers of all kinds to the destitute women in the article on homelessness in this issue of *Spare Rib*, the battle for a roof over one's head is flanked on the one side by the inadequacies of council housing provision in a general housing crisis, and on the other by the assumption, institutionalised by housing ministries, town planners and architects, that the family is the basic living unit – the same assumption that places the value judgement of deviance on the homeless women. Marriage is not just a meal ticket, but a passport to housing, in several ways. Obviously it is in home-ownership and mortgage buying, because men earn higher wages, but it applies also in the queue for council housing, because allocations are based so firmly on family status.

Since speculation in land and property forced house prices up, and changes in the law gave tenants in private rented accommodation more rights, housing in the private sector has become scarcer and scarcer, and rents more and more impossible. A two-room flatlet in London averages at £20, a bedsit at £10. These factors have helped push the housing problem on to the shoulders of local authorities and have revealed the real chaos of housing provision in Welfare State Britain. Women make up a large section of those who suffer extremes of hardship in this state of affairs – single women, women whose families have grown up, women whose families have broken up, gay women whose choices do not include family life. Council housing policies focussing on the family as a basis for allocation do not answer their needs.

What happens to women who have had homes and families and, for one reason or another, left them? Their standard of housing, like their income level, plummets suddenly. If they have children, they will certainly be ill-fitted to compete in the scrabble for private rented places: although it is no longer legal for landlords to stipulate "No Coloureds" they can still say openly "No children". If they have children, they will be eligible for council housing. But because waiting lists are impossibly long, even static in many London boroughs, they will first have to run the gauntlet of homeless hostels, bed and breakfasts, or some years in "Part III" ghettos – Part III accommodation is short-life council property used for homeless families – decaying sub-standard tenements and houses due for demolition. With prospects like this to daunt them, how many women just cannot bring themselves to get out of a miserable or violent marriage until the point where they are forced to flee to a Battered Wives centre for refuge?

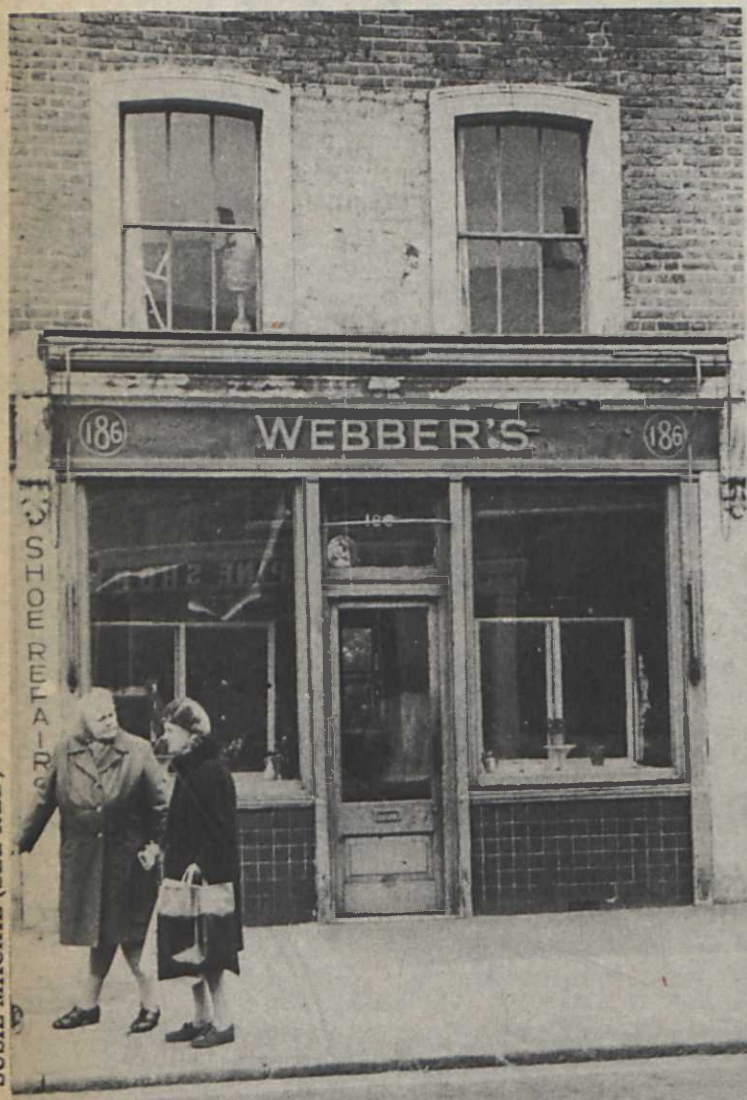
An increasing number of women take matters into their own hands and meet their own needs by squatting, by direct action forcing the urgency of their situations on unwilling local authorities. There have been single women's squats, gay women's squats, unsupported mothers' squats. The scope of this direct action in housing – 25,000 squatters in London, at least 10,000 outside – has at last forced the Department of the Environment to consult with local authorities in an attempt to formulate a national policy on squatting. One of their recommendations is that licenses should be granted to squatters. The consultation document being circulated admits that the best solution would be to prevent squatting by providing suitable housing for all, not just families, and never leaving property empty. But there are no proposals for action on this. Why not? Because to provide this suitable housing the Government would have to take very drastic steps, very socialist steps. They would have to challenge the power of the City bankers whose interest charges on building loans cripple local authority housing programmes. They would have to clamp down ruthlessly on land and property speculation. They might even have to requisition empty property for housing!

Whenever women envisage the possibility of the security of a decent place to live and a choice of ways to live – such a modest-sounding demand – and maybe even decide that this is their right, the whole ugly picture of housing profits, land speculation and powerful vested interests reveals itself. Nevertheless it's necessary to fight for that security and that choice; otherwise women's futures will continue to be defined either by the need to marry to get a roof over their heads, or to endure years of married misery and even brutality to keep the roof they've got. □

Alison Fell

'Our food co-op knows

By Alison Fell and Jill Nicholls



In the last months of 1973 one of the prime problems of living for everyone was rising food prices. It was hard to combat this in any practical way, let alone to attack the causes of the inflation. By Christmas people felt angrier and yet even more powerless than before. It was around then that a group of active women from East London decided that a food co-op might be one way women could organise together about something which affected them so basically. A few were women from a political group – East London Big Flame. The others were housewives and working women from Lincoln Estate in Bow. Together they visited the 'Red Market', a kind of co-op which had been operating with some success on a West London Estate, discussed this, and set about writing a leaflet which local children helped distribute around Lincoln Estate. Although the shopping amenities there are meagre – only two corner shops, and those expensive, and the nearest market a 1½ mile walk away – the first leaflet brought no response.

"I got a leaflet through my door, the first time I read it but took no notice, the second time I said I'm going to find out what it is, and ever since then I'm in the food co-op."

However the women took a risk and decided to buy more food than they needed for themselves. They set up a table in front of the estate and sold the surplus.

"I was coming back from shopping and there was a stall and some women over on the green by some of the flats and one of them approached me about the food co-op and asked me if I was interested, and asked me to go and have a look at some of the things they had on display, and I was very impressed. I've been going to the food co-op ever since. I find it makes a vast difference in my money."

The food co-op began to attract interest and support from other tenants. However, the local shopkeepers, threatening to contact the GLC and tell them that the women were selling on their property, sent the police round. Because of this harassment the women stopped selling on the green and restricted their buying to the needs of those already in the food co-op and sharing in its work. "We started sharing the food out at someone's flat, different every fortnight. But it was chaotic with nine or ten people trying to pick up their orders in someone else's sitting room."

They had approached the local tenants' committee for use of the tenants' hall but the committee wouldn't hear of it being used for food distribution. Luckily a woman living nearby in short-life housing over a semi-derelict shop offered the use of the shopfront, and it's here that food is stored now, and orders shared out on Saturday mornings.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING

So how does it work? The main organising and allotting of tasks is done at a fortnightly Wednesday meeting. Order forms are given out and prices discussed; everyone decides what they need for the week, fills out an order form and puts enough cash in the float to cover their order – if they have the lump sum, otherwise they pay when collecting their order. The women organised a jumble sale to provide a cash float to start them off, foreseeing that some people might be too hard up midweek to lay out large sums for advance buying. Up to £100 is handled every week. When it came to finding out where to buy cheaply and in bulk the women drew on their own experience of bargain hunting, and that of friends and relatives who had lived in the area for a long time.

"At first people didn't want to share their special knowledge because they thought it made them better shoppers than the others. But gradually we shared everything we knew about the best places to buy things so that we could all benefit and we found out the best places to buy food wholesale. Now, instead of "I know the best place" it's "Our food co-op knows the best place." Individual fads about certain brands – "I only use Heinz Baked Beans, I wouldn't touch anything else, I'm funny that way" – tended to lose their importance as the collective effort became more absorbing. "Now people mostly trust the choice of whoever does the shopping."

There are three places the women buy their stock. On Thursday mornings two women drive to Wapping warehouse, which takes in supermarket tinned goods with damaged wrappers. On Fridays the eggs, potatoes and apples, which come straight from a farm, are picked up. Also on Friday, two other women visit the Cashmart where they buy all their basic groceries, meat and household goods like toothpaste, bleach, toilet rolls. On Friday evening two people go through all the bulk-bought goods using the order forms and pack each order into a separate box. Meat is wrapped, priced and kept in someone's freezer overnight.

"It takes two to three hours, but it's much more enjoyable than shopping, you have a bit of a natter with whoever's doing it. It's not just walking into a shop and getting served."

From 10 o'clock on Saturday mornings the shop fills up with people collecting their orders, buying extras from what's left over, perhaps, and checking out the bills. Children play among the tins and boxes. This is one of the few times that men appear on the scene – some husbands pick up their wives' orders but none are directly involved in organising apart from a couple of the Big Flame men who sometimes help with the driving. Accounts like other tasks are shared as far as possible.

"It may be more efficient keeping the same jobs but it's more fun taking it in turns going to the different places, otherwise it gets to be humdrum, a chore."

"It's been slow to get the jobs shared out equally, only some of the Big Flame women can drive and though we've planned to teach people to drive we've not got round to it yet."

But the major problems of organising such a self-help project have mainly been solved and the People's Food Co-op has kept going

the best place'

where others have folded either from lack of a committed enough group to keep them running, or the absence of real material need among the members.

OPENING OUT

Apart from the material advantage of cheaper food and the satisfaction to be gained from bypassing some of the middle men in the food distribution racket, the food co-op attracted members for other, more social reasons. The labour connected with feeding the family is usually a lonely, never-ending chore, a matter of tramping round supermarkets getting a stuffy head and bleary eyes, a matter of scrabbling through magazines for recipes which might prove your worth to . . . whom? Yourself, neighbours, husband, kids? These lonely battles for self-respect are not easy for women to win. When these tasks are done communally, they still amount to hard work, but it's sociable work. The women who joined wanted more than cheap food, they wanted to get out of the house, to make friends. Isolation bred suspicion — some were afraid to speak to neighbours in the lifts in case they were criticised for being unmarried mothers; some were so apprehensive about anything new that they answered

through the letterbox when the first leafletters came round. They aren't scared any more. A shared project of their own and opportunities for discussing everything under the sun have opened them up.

The energy generated by the food co-op has carried over into other areas — there's a Tuesday afternoon playgroup for the kids and a talk group for the mothers, which has lasted, while a baby-sitting scheme failed. A small self-help therapy group set up by women in Big Flame meets fortnightly.

But they feel that the food co-op itself could do more, could expand and cater for more people than it does at present. They are making another attempt to get the tenants' hall in order to open out the Wednesday meetings so that women who might have felt that the food co-op was exclusive to a group of friends would find it easier to join in and draw on its resources. Certainly for the ten or so women who have been deeply and consistently involved since the co-op began eighteen months ago, the benefits of this kind of organising have been tangible and many-sided.

"I'd like to live more communally next. You get energy off others. You can't do it alone."□



SUSIE MACKIE (SEE RED)

SUSIE MACKIE (SEE RED)

!KUNG WOMEN



The ! in the word !Kung, an onomatopoeic symbol denoting a "click" sound, is pronounced by clicking the tongue in the back of the throat while simultaneously saying "Kung".

Women coming back after a day's gathering. Weight of nuts and other food varies, but these women are carrying close to 40 pounds in their karosses (leather pouches). The first two women are carrying children as well as nuts.

Marjorie Shostak lived for two years with the San !Kung in the Kalahari Desert. She taped extensive interviews with the women in an attempt to grasp emotionally what it is like to be a woman in a society which is quite different from our own—a semi-nomadic society where traditionally there is no accumulation of individual wealth, no chief and no rigid division into a domestic and a public sphere. Marjorie explains why she became interested in the San with part of an interview with a San woman called N isa.

The San !Kung (bushmen) of the Kalahari Desert in Botswana, Africa, have been the focus of much research over the past 25 years. Studies have been done on what they eat, where they live, how they bring up their children and many other aspects of their way of life. But why have they aroused such intensive interest among anthropologists and other scientists?

The San are one of the last groups of people whose subsistence is based on hunting and gathering. This means they neither plant nor till the soil, nor follow herds of

animals; everything they need they get from the land. Their food consists of gathered nuts, roots and berries, and hunted meat. Their clothing and blankets are made from animal hides, and their houses from tree branches and cut-grass.

Although no known present day hunters and gatherers are so isolated that they cannot obtain (valued) items like metal pots, knives and colourful beads, the San are nevertheless in the most basic sense completely dependent on the natural world in which they live.

While this situation is already changing and will undoubtedly change dramatically during the next few years, it obtained during the major part of the research.

Interesting facts, but is there more? Yes, hunting and gathering as a way of life is important because it was the main subsistence pattern for 99% of the time we and our recent pre-human ancestors have lived on the earth. Agriculture as a way of earning a living is only 10,000 years old. All human social forms, all patterns of family life, social behaviour, began to evolve in a hunting and

gathering setting. If we are to understand anything of the types of environment and kinds of stresses to which humankind adapted most of its psychological and physiological responses, then the hunting and gathering life must be described completely and understood while it lasts.

Hunters and gatherers are no more primitive as human beings than people living by more complex socio-economic modes. Neither can it be assumed that they are identical to our ancestors—they are not. It is simply that by understanding the dynamics of present-day hunting and gathering life, it becomes possible to make reasonable guesses about our past and about the influence of a huge percentage of human history.

Organisation and beliefs

What is known about contemporary hunters and gatherers? Some general principles emerge from studies done among extant groups. They are semi-nomadic, living in bands of from 15 to 20, moving from one place to another depending on the availability of food, water and game. Political organisation amongst the San is loose with no authorised "chief" or "head man".

For the most part they freely share possessions amongst themselves. Traditionally individuals don't accumulate possessions: a man has his bows and arrows, spear and rope pouch, a woman has her digging stick and beads. San children are encouraged to share things because exchange is so basic to adult social interactions. Among the first words a child learns are "na" (give it to me) and "i" (here take this).

Women contribute 60% to 80% of all food eaten by gathering vegetables, the rest consists of hunted meat. Women are nearly as mobile as men, leaving the village just as frequently to find food, though they don't go as far. The women spend their days together, with the older women often carrying the youngest children while their mothers gather.

Jobs are often sex-stereotyped; for example, men tan skins and women sew beads on them, but no one job is more tedious or confining than another. All labour benefits for the most part the entire group.

It has been suggested that women's contribution to the group's subsistence is the reason why they have some say in group affairs and some control over their own lives (i.e. in terminating an unsatisfactory marriage). Women seem to have tremendous influence on the men—the men acknowledge the women's importance first by their sexuality, without it, men say, they would die, and secondly because of the food they contribute. However, relations between the sexes are not strictly egalitarian; the women's description of their childhoods and marriages suggest that men, because of their greater strength, have power and can exercise their will in relation to women.

When I first started living among the !Kung, I hoped to establish informal relationships with several people in which we would exchange feelings about experiences we shared and those that were different. As I became fluent in the language, I realised that this was not possible. Apart from being a foreigner, I was seen as someone with unlimited wealth, who didn't

freely share her possessions as they did. If I wanted something from them, they in turn wanted something back from me. After considering carefully how payment might affect both the type of information I wanted and the delicate economic balance of a semi-nomadic people, I finally decided that some form of payment would be appropriate. People felt that this was fair and became more responsive to my probing.

After many months of experimenting with different interview techniques, I settled on one which I used for all long term interviews. I would ask someone to "enter talks" with me and we would sit, for an hour or more at a time over a period of about two weeks, talking while I taped the conversation. I was interested in the women's life-cycles.

The Pattern of the Women's Lives

Childhood

Attitudes towards girl and boy children are, at least at first, very similar. Both sexes are equally loved and desired. Parents are not possessive about their children. The bonds are very close into adulthood, they value the relationship they have together, but the competitive aspect of possessiveness is completely absent.

Unlike Western children the San children are not strongly pressured to obey authority. They are encouraged to respect their own needs and may refuse to do things they feel strongly against.

For the first two or three years of her life a girl spends most of her time in a sling astride her mother's hip, going wherever she goes, sleeping beside her and nursing at will. After the end of the third year, the mother will most likely be pregnant again and the unpleasant experience of weaning both from the breast and from being carried will begin.

She will start to spend increasing amounts of time playing games with other children and experimenting with playful sex. Boys and girls play together in groups of mixed ages which perhaps explains the almost complete absence of competitive games.

Girlhood

If she wants to, a girl can follow her mother on gathering trips, learning as she goes, and a boy may follow his father on the hunt. However, both boys and girls have practically no responsibilities until their middle teenage years, and if they chose not to work, they are under no obligation to do so. Older children often move out of their parents' huts and build small huts of their own, or share them with other adolescents.

A girl may marry an older man when she is only 12, but the marriage will not be consummated until she begins to menstruate around the age of 15 or 16. This event is marked by a ceremony which lasts the duration of the flow. Parents are usually responsible for arranging the first marriage and later marriages if the couple is still young but their decision is not final. If the girl is strongly opposed to it, the marriage will not take place.

It will not be until the birth of her first child that a woman will be expected to assume full adult responsibilities. When her second child is born, she is expected to move from her mother's village to her husband's family village.

Womanhood

During her reproductive years, a woman will have a child on average every four years. Continuous breast feeding seems to inhibit conception. Moreover, recent research has suggested that unless a woman has a certain amount of body fat, she may not ovulate and menstruate. When a woman is breast feeding she needs about 1,000 calories in excess of her usual needs. Nomadic women are thin anyway, so during the three or four years a woman nurses her baby she may have too little fat for ovulation to take place.

Women are chiefly responsible for taking care of the children, though men enjoy the children, and play with them. When a woman goes gathering, another woman remaining in the village will oversee the group of children. Sometimes, if a man is around he will watch the children.

Until the age of 60 or so a woman continues to gather food. If she lives to grow old (average life expectancy at the age of 15 is 55), her children will start taking over the responsibility of feeding her and ultimately she will be dependent on them until her death.

An outline of a woman's life, though informative, leaves too many questions unanswered: what is the *experience* of growing up and growing old among the San? How does an individual see herself, her friends, marriage? How does she see love, work, sex and death?

I talked with eight women about as many different aspects of their lives as they were willing to discuss with me. Talking about experiences and telling stories is one of the main sources of entertainment for the San. They have no written form in which to express themselves: people sit around for hours talking to one another. Among the women I interviewed, one was exceptional in her ability to tell a story vibrantly, expressively and dramatically. Her name is Nāsa. At the time of our interview she was almost 50 years old. Although she spoke extensively about each stage of her life, only a portion of her memories of her childhood are presented here.



Nut gathering in the mongongo nut groves.

N=isa



MARJORIE SHOSTACK

"We stayed together and danced and sang and played. Most of the time we played the play of children, that of having sex with one another. We all did that."

DURING the time I cried because I wanted to nurse¹ and couldn't, I sometimes took food from our hut when mother was away gathering. My parents hit me when I took things; they left me alone when I didn't. Some days when I remained in the village, I didn't take and ruin any of their things. Other days, when they were not there, I ruined their things. That's when they hit me. Then they said I was without brains.

Once my mother took a digging stick and hit me. She hit me so hard she made my back hurt. I cried and cried and kept crying and then I was sick². My father said to her, "What did you do? You took your digging stick and not a soft branch to hit the child? You hit that small child with a stick? You might have broken her back!"

I said, "I won't eat any of your xaru bulbs. I'm going to go and eat grandma's xaru bulbs."

I went to the village where my mother's mother lived and told myself I would eat with her. When I got to her hut, grandma roasted xaru bulbs and I ate and ate and ate. I slept beside her and lived there for a while.

Once, when it was getting dark, I got up and walked to my mother's hut and lay with her and my father. Another day, when they were away, I climbed the tree where the little pouch hung and took the xaru again. I took the big bulbs and put them in the little pouch my father had sewn for me. I sat there and ate them and when my parents returned they accused me of eating the xaru. I said I didn't. They said I did. Then I started to cry and my father hit me and my mother yelled at me and said, "Don't take things! You don't understand? I tell you and you don't understand. Your ears don't hear me when I talk to you."

I thought, "No, mother is making me feel very bad. I am going to go and stay with grandma.³ Mother says I take things and hits me until my skin hurts. I'm going to go to grandma's and sleep beside her. She will prepare xaru for me and I will eat them."

I went to my grandmother's and she said, "No, I can't take care of you. If you try, you will be hungry because I am old and just go gathering one day at a time. In the morning I rest and while we are sitting together, hunger will kill you. Now, go and be good. Sit nicely beside your mother and father."

I said, "No, no, they will hit me. Today my skin hurts and I want to stay with you."

I stayed with my grandmother for a while and then one day she said she was taking me back to my parents' village. She carried me there and gave me to my mother. Then she said, "Daughter, today I refused N isa because I can't take care of her well. She's just a child and you shouldn't hit her and hit her. If she is a person who likes food, then she likes it and eats very well. Some of you are lazy and left her without enough food and she didn't grow well. Maybe that's what happened. When I used to take care of her, there was a lot of food and I fed her well. She grew up with me for a while and when she went back with you, you killed her with hunger. With your own hands, you hit her as though she weren't a !Kung. She cried and cried and was just a little thing. Yet, you yelled at her."

When my grandmother said that, I was happy. I held happiness in my heart because grandmother was clolding mother. That made me happy. I laughed and laughed. Then grandmother went back to her village. When she left, I cried. My father scolded me for crying and said, "When you left us, we missed you. We wanted you to come back. Yes, your mother even came and looked for you. But today you refuse to be with her. Your mother was the one who gave birth to you and now you will do things with her and go gathering with her."

But I cried and cried and refused to be with her. I said, "Mother, let me just stay with grandmother. I will follow her back to her village."

My father said, "Be quiet. There is nothing here that will hit you. Now, be quiet."

Then I was quiet and my father dug xaru and chon bulbs and I ate them. I ate the roots and bulbs and nuts they gathered and they didn't scold me.

As I was growing up, I sometimes stayed with my mother's sister for days at a time and then went back to mother's. I stayed with mother for a while and then passed on to grandmother's. I would go there for many days. Everybody helped bring me up—my mother's sister, my father, my brother, my grandmother. Look at how I am today, I'm very small. That's because people brought me up badly. I was too difficult for them.

WHEN a child sleeps beside his mother, in front of her, and his father sleeps behind her and makes love to her, the child watches. Perhaps this is the way the child learns. Because as his father lies with his mother, the child watches. The child is still senseless and is without intelligence, and when his father lies with his mother he just watches.

Then, when he and the other children are playing, if he is a little boy, he will take his younger sister and have sex with her. Because he saw his mother and father do that. So he takes her. And as he lives, he lives in the bush and continues to play now with other children and they have sex with each other and play and play and play. The take food from the village and go back to the bush and continue their games. That's the way they grow up. When the sun is low in the sky they return to the village and sit down. They return when evening is just beginning to set and play the same way in the middle of the village. That's what they do.⁴ I remember my parents when they lay together. Night . . . at night my father lay with my mother. I still wouldn't have fallen asleep; I'd just be lying still. My father slept with my mother and I watched. Why wasn't my father concerned about me, that I might be up? I was fairly old by then. Why wasn't he respectful of me? Why wasn't he respectful? Adults should be concerned that a child may be awake. I couldn't sleep and why were they making love? That's what I thought. I thought that my mother and father weren't respectful of me. They didn't worry if I was dead asleep or not. If they did, they they could lie together and no one would hear; then I'd be asleep and wouldn't wake up. That's what I thought.

Then, long ago, I refused to sleep in their hut. I said, "No. Today I won't lie down

with mother and father. Today I will sleep alone in another hut."

I refused to stay with them because they weren't respectful of me.

A child that is nursing doesn't know anything because he still has no intelligence. When he is nursing, he has no thoughts. The milk which he is nursing is the only thing he knows. Then he learns to sit. But even when he sits, he still doesn't think about things, because his intelligence hasn't yet come to him. Where could he take his thoughts from? The only thought is nursing. But when he grows and is bigger and he is walking, he has many thoughts. His thoughts now exist and as he sits, he thinks about the "work" of sexual intercourse. He sits and thinks about it and if he is a little boy he plays with the other children and teaches it to himself. The little girls are also learning it by themselves.

They play and play and have sex with one another and when they see a little girl by herself, they take her. She cries and cries. That's how he teaches himself and that's how she teaches herself. They play and play and teach themselves. Little boys are the first ones to know its sweetness. That's why they do that when they play. Yes. A young girl, while she is still a child, her thoughts don't know it. A little boy has a penis and perhaps, while he is still inside his mother's belly, he already knows about having sex. Because boys know how to do things with their genitals. They take little girls and push them down and have sex with them. Even if you are just playing, they do that.

Sometimes the boys ask you if you want to play a game with your genitals and the girls say no. They say they don't want to play that game but they'd like to play other games. The boys tell you that having sex is what playing is all about.

I didn't know about it and they taught it to me. After they taught me and taught me, I didn't cry. Some of the others knew it long before I did, they had taught themselves and knew it. The little boys used to ask me why I always cried when they played. I said, "You all . . . you all are playing and say that we should have sex together. That's why I'm crying. I'm going to tell mother you said we should do that."

Some days I refused and remained in the village and just stayed with mother. Some days I went with them and sometimes I refused to play that game. Other times I agreed. The little boys entered the play huts where the girls were and we played together and then they lay down with us. My boyfriend came to see me and we lived like that and played. We would lie down together and they would have sex with us.

When you are a child you play at nothing things. You build little huts and play and play and play. Then you come back to the village and continue playing. If people bother you, you get up and play somewhere else.

Once we came back from playing in a pool of rain water and then went back to the little huts we had made. We stayed there and played at being hunters and we went out tracking animals and when we saw one we struck it with our make-believe arrows. We took some leaves and hung them over a stick and pretended it was meat. Then we carried it back to our village. When we got back, we stayed there and ate the meat

Also in the nut groves; older women sometimes help carry smaller children. In this case the children are carried by an aunt and a grandmother.



MARJORIE SHOSTACK

and then the meat was gone. We went out again, found another animal and killed it. We again threw leaves over a stick, put other leaves in our karosses⁵, and brought it back. We played at living in the bush like that. We pretended to get some water and we ate the meat. That's how we played.

We made believe about everything. We made believe we cooked food and then we took it out of fire. We had a trance dance and we sang and danced and danced and sang and the boys made believe they were curing us. They went, "Xai-----i! Kow-a-di!"⁶

They cured us and we sang and danced and danced more and more. Sometimes the sun set while we were visiting in our friends' village. Even though night had sat, we stayed in the centre of the village and played together. We stayed into the night, dancing and singing, and then left one another and went to sleep. We were up again in the morning and started playing again. Sometimes we played with the children from the other village, sometimes we just played by ourselves in the bush. That's what we did. We lived like that.

We took food from the village and when we played in our village, we shared it with one another and ate it and gave it and took it. We stayed together and danced and sang and played. Most of the time we played the play of children, that of having sex with one another. We all did that. That was our work. Did we have any sense? No, we didn't have any sense and just did our work.

ONE day, when I was fairly big, I went with some of my friends and with my younger brother and my younger sister away from the village and into the bush. We walked a long way. As we were walking, I saw tracks of a baby kudu in the sand. I called to everyone and showed them what I had seen, "Everybody come here! Here are the tracks of a baby kudu. Let's see if we can find it."

We walked along, following the tracks, and walked and walked and kept walking. As we were following the tracks around, we saw, in the shade of a tree, the little kudu dead asleep. I jumped up grabbed it. It cried, "Ehnnn. . . Ehnnn. . ."

And I cried out as it freed itself and ran away. I hadn't really caught it well. We started following the tracks it made as it ran away. I ran on ahead of everyone and ran so hard and so fast that I was alone. I came on it and jumped on it and killed it. Then I grabbed its legs and carried it back. I was breathing very hard. "Whew . . . whew . . . whew . . . whew . . .!"

When I came to where the rest of them were, my older cousin said to me, "My cousin, my little cousin killed a kudu! The rest of you here, what are you doing? How come we men didn't kill the kudu? This young girl has so much 'run' in her that she killed the kudu!"

I gave the animal back to my cousin and he carried it. On the way back to the village we saw another small animal, a steenbok. One of my girlfriends and her older

brother ran after it and then he killed it. That day we brought a lot of meat back with us to the village. We cooked it and had plenty to eat. □



Graphic bead design made by a Bushman woman.

1. Nfisa was probably between the ages of 5 and 7 in this section. In reference to nursing, the San believe that a child should be weaned as soon as the mother realises that she is pregnant again; if the child continues to nurse, they think that the health of either the child or the foetus may be endangered.

2. The San believe that expressions of intense anger are often followed by sickness in the person to whom the anger is directed. Nfisa's tales of physical punishment are puzzling. The San are lenient and indulgent towards their children and rarely observed using any form of physical punishment.

3. Leaving her mother's home for her grandmother's was made easier by the San tradition of multiple caretaking.

4. Nfisa was 6 to 12 years old.

5. The karosse is a skin worn by the women. When it is tied around the waist and neck, a pouch is formed in which children and food are carried.

6. This is cried out during the trance dance by a man in a trance and in the act of curing. Prepared for *Kalahari Hunter Gatherers* ed. R.B. Lee and I. Devore, Harvard University Press 1976. Published in the *second wave* Vol.3 No.3. A magazine of the new feminism.

SISTERS

If you are an engineering staff worker

JOIN TASS

The staff section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers

If you oppose sex discrimination in jobs, in pay, in opportunity

JOIN TASS

Don't let the employers organise you out of equal pay and equal opportunities. Legislation will not be enough.

YOU NEED ORGANISATION NEGOTIATION

As well as legislation.

Write for application, or organise a meeting.

Contact: Judith Hunt, National Womens Officer, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, Technical Administrative and Supervisory Section, Onslow Hall, Little Green, Richmond, Surrey.



NEWS

South Africa Women's Day

"For an African woman, be she one minute old, one hour old, August 9 has a special meaning." Thembi Setlhapelo was speaking at a meeting held in London to celebrate South Africa Women's Day.

August 9 marks the day in 1956 when 20,000 South African women marched to Pretoria to protest the extension of passes to women. Since then the day has been commemorated by meetings, like this one in London, of women and men committed to the struggle against apartheid.

In South Africa, where black oppression is rooted in the structures of apartheid, "power is the central question for us", began Hilda Bernstein, exiled artist and author of *For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears** "But we want the black men of South Africa to understand that power is also basic to women's liberation."

"Black men are not the most oppressed of South Africa. Black women are at the very bottom of the pile."

Three interdependent aspects of apartheid create and perpetuate this oppression. The migratory labour system makes it impossible for women to live with their husbands. "During their most sexually active years, husbands and wives are separated", she emphasised.

"The extended migratory labour system is operated through the application of the pass laws, and these mesh together with the uprooting and removal of people." The object of these mass population removals is the creation of separate Bantustans — areas designated by successive white governments for occupation by



INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE AND AID FUND

THE LONELY WOMAN BECOMES STRONG

Africans.

There are other forms of oppression. "Women are perpetual minors under African customary law. They cannot enter into contracts, cannot inherit property, cannot have guardianship of their children. Regardless of age and marital status women are subject to the authority of men. But this doesn't reflect the tribal system, which traditionally was not so arbitrary."

"Poverty is a disability, leading to malnutrition and the death of young children," Ms Bernstein continued. "A white woman spends two or three years in childbearing; a black woman must spend years and years because the children die."

"Loneliness is a disability from which women suffer. Think of this, you young women here."

And yet these women have never been completely broken. They have learned how to resist and to inspire their sisters to continue fighting. "The lonely woman becomes strong; the woman who knows she cannot live with a man becomes strong."

Prison Walls

Bringing greetings from the National Assembly of Women in this country, Deanna Levin said, "We are with you 100%, 200%. Your struggle is our struggle."

Then there was a reading of poetry. A young black woman named Melody read A.N.C. Kumalo's poem to Lilian Ngoyi, President of the Federation of South African Women, house-arrested for eleven years. While the poem was read a child cried so they said "Ssh."

Lilian

*I hear you are fifty-nine
I've never met you
only seen pictures of you
heard people talk about you
I know you must still be
young and beautiful*

*The journalist reports
on the fifteen years
State decree
severing contact
with humanity...*

*within that housejail
dreams permitted
deprived of voice
fifteen
consecutive
years*

*To the journalist
you are a lioness
undaunted
moved to anger
for those
you were unable to help —
this your sole regret...*

*You laugh
weep
shake with rage
your voice dropping
as you explain*

*"my people are suffering
... they suffer".*

*Listen Lilian
every woman of fifty-nine
should be beautiful
like you.*

Freedom Songs in Nguni

Shirley Talbot, a lecturer in sociology at a Merseyside technical college, read out messages of solidarity, from Dublin ASTMS, representing 7000 workers, and the Federation of Cuban Women, who sent 'vibrant homage' to the women who had fallen in the liberation struggle. "The others are in Portuguese and other languages — I can't read them," she apologised.

Then Polly Gastor, who had just returned from Guinea-Bissau, described a play about the history of Mozambican women performed at the Mozambique Independence Celebrations in June. Continuing the clapping after Polly Gastor had spoken, chairwoman Thembi Setlhapelo started to sing.

Everyone sang with her. 'The African's Enemy is the Pass' was followed by the song of the women who marched to Pretoria in 1956, both sung in Nguni.

The celebration ended with a reminder from Ms Setlhapelo. "It is up to you, up to me to stand up and do the job. Our job is to liberate our country and go back home. We are here today because of the riches of our country. It is us who are oppressed. No revolution has been won by those who are not directly affected."

Scattered Women

The Women's Section of the African National Congress,

which organised this meeting, meets regularly in London. It was formed in the mid-sixties to organise South African women here and to organise international solidarity with the ANC, banned in 1960.

"I would ask you to remember on this day our women scattered all over the world. We celebrate this day as South African women in exile," Shirley Talbot had said. She was speaking at an ANC meeting of about forty women in London on International Women's Day this year, March 8.

Describing the role played by black South African women in political struggle, from tribal resistance to the early European settlers to underground work and armed struggle in the 1960s, she had continued:

"Our history records the tremendous contribution made by the women in exile. Our work of propaganda must carry on without any let-up."

"At the moment we are witnessing a new tactical offensive by the Vorster regime, which is seeking so-called 'detente' — a relationship of 'live and let live' with those African regimes which... for whatever reason are prepared to give him a hearing."

"At the same time the Apartheid regime is pretending to the world that by removing 'petty apartheid' it is meeting Africans' demands. There is a danger that those basically well-intentioned towards us are taken in to some degree by these moves of Vorster. We must explain patiently and above all often that the situation is not changing through 'reform from above'," she had emphasised.

"Our voice carries special credibility since we are of South Africa and bear the marks of our oppression. If we do not speak

*Reading A.N.C. Kumalo's poem
Lilian Ngoyi at South Africa
Women's Day Celebration,
Holborn Council Chambers,
London, August 9*

out, can we expect others to aid us?"

There is another aspect to solidarity, Shirley Talbot had continued. "We, the women have got to improve the nature of our communications with one another. We must hold together. We ought to overcome our separateness and in some cases our competitiveness through deliberate consciousness-raising."

"It is important that especially this year we go out as ambassadors for the freedom struggle to groups, above all black women's groups, with direct experience of racism."

"This does not mean we leave out white women. There are situations in which South African whites talk to other whites with the greatest authenticity. Similarly, women talk most authentically to other women," she had argued.

"I make these remarks not in order to create artificial divisions but to argue that we must recognise these pre-existing divisions arising from the state of the world as it is in our struggle to overcome the same divisions in the world as we want to make it." □

Ann Scott

'For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears' by Hilda Bernstein, is available from the International Defence and Aid Fund, 104-106 Newgate Street, London EC1, price 50p. African National Congress (Women's Section), 49 Rathbone Street, London W1A 4NL, tel: 01-580 5303. Extracts from 'Lilian Ngoyi' appear by permission of A.N.C. Kumalo.

TALKING ABOUT WRITING

Nine women met for a two-day writers' workshop in a farmhouse near Lancaster in August. There were five of us from in and around the Lancaster area, one from London, one from Nottingham and two from Manchester.

The group seemed a good size, and being together for a weekend in the country gave us time to relax together more than a conference workshop usually can. We shared our writing — mainly poetry and personal exploration (some of us had never shown anything to anyone before), and that led into sharing experiences about many things: sexuality, anger, love...

We trusted each other enough to share, to listen to each other, to talk; we laughed and cried, too. The writing was powerful and good; we read aloud, and we began to talk about the structures of what we write, why we write (and why we don't, or do but throw things away). We talked about what makes writing powerful, what makes it 'work' for others and for ourselves.

We left hoping to meet again, and to start regular writing workshops in our own local areas. We didn't talk directly, as we thought we might, about starting a new magazine for women's writing, though we did talk of starting an informal exchange of writing, comments and criticisms.

Finally, apologies to women from the writing workshop at the Manchester conference whose addresses got lost. ☐ Contact address (send SAE please): Women's Writing Weekend, Dumb Toms, Ingleton, Carnforth, Lancs.



IBM Typesetting by Caroline MacKechnie/Shirley Divers 105 Golborne Road, London W10 Telephone 01-969 5083 Good rates for feminist/alternative books, mags, pamphlets, etc. Illustration and paste-up too.

NURSERY THEATRE

NORWICH: The Working Women's Charter group is organising around Point 6 of the Charter, which relates to nursery provision. The group is petitioning in the street for the council to provide more day care nurseries free of charge and with extended hours to suit working mothers.

Over the summer they decided to turn their energies to street theatre. "We have finally come up with a short play and song", they write, "with the purpose of getting people's interest aroused and to collect signatures."

"It has been great for bringing people together to decide collectively what we should do. We have performed twice and found various problems with not being loud enough or it not being clear to people. So more work was done to cut out as much speech as possible and substitute with mime. There is a master of ceremonies who tells the story to the audience and makes a plea for them to help by signing the petition."

"There are about six women and five men in the play, plus kids. As many of the people in the Charter group are also in the National Abortion Campaign, we hope to extend our theatre."

If you are from a Charter group and would like some kind of contact between groups write and let's see what we can do, to Working Women's Charter, 71a Park Lane, Norwich.

Point 6) Improved provision of local authority day nurseries, free of charge, with extended hours to suit working mothers. Provision of nursery classes in day nurseries. More nursery schools.

AGAINST THE IMMIGRATION ACT

A campaign has been started for the repeal of the most repressive piece of legislation in Britain.

The 1971 Immigration Act embodies all the racist provisions of British immigration law. Black immigration (although not white) has been virtually stopped and immigrant workers are made dependent on their employers' goodwill to renew their work permits.

The Act is also sexist. See *Spare Ribs 38* for the treatment of West Indian unmarried mothers, and 25 for the case of British or resident wives of foreign husbands.

Contact: Franco Caprino, 45 Kensington Park Rd, W11, tel: 01-727 2993 or 674 5775. ☐



Joan Jara, widow of murdered Chilean singer Victor Jara, at a picket in London in September demanding an end to repression of women and children in Chile.

Apart from all the general hardship brought by the military Junta's economic policies in the two years since the coup which overthrew President Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity government, women and children also suffer special forms of repression.

Under Popular Unity they were deeply involved in community organisation and many have now been arrested for their activities. But they are also held as hostages for their male relatives, and hundreds have remained for months in prison without trial.

The torture, rape, beatings and deprivations defy the imagination. Women are mass-raped not only by soldiers, but also by specially-trained dogs, sometimes in front of their children.

Chile Women's Group, 91 Alderney Street, London SW1, aim to publish a newsletter in October. Write to them for more information.

JUST OUT

25 minute black-and-white newsreel film (16mm)

on

WOMEN'S FIGHT FOR FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND

available from the Other Cinema

12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2

(tel: 01-734 8508/9) Hire fee £5

This film is the first of a series of monthly newsreels to be made by the *Newsreel Collective*. The next two films will be about the revolutionary situation in Portugal, and on working-class struggles around housing, rents and squatting in Britain.

Psychoanalytic Congress: PENIS ENVY AND THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER

For many years the notion of penis envy has been understood as the foundation of the psychoanalytic theory of female sexuality. Two papers on 'Freud and Female Sexuality', given at the 29th International Psychoanalytic Congress in London during July, attempt a new interpretation of childhood conflicts and aid the formation of a more articulate sense of female sexual identity.

Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, a French analyst, felt that Freud's theory of female sexuality had led to a distorted understanding of the importance of the penis in formation of sexual identity. She regarded the theory of penis envy in little girls as a *defensive* argument — self-protective and male-biased.

This theory denies that every child has an instinctive and intuitive understanding that the little girl has a vagina, which complements the little boy's penis (which can be seen, and therefore used early on to confirm a sense of sexual identity).

If the child's knowledge of the presence of this organ has to be repressed or buried for some reason, then the child is thrown back on the theory of phallic supremacy. (A three-year-old girl in London, for instance, said that she "only had a little slit" while her brother had a penis. This came after a book given to her by her parents had been read to her.)

Ms Smirgel argued the primacy of the dependence of children of both sexes on the mother. The mother is terrible in her power to give life and death by giving or withholding biological and psychological

sustenance. The conflict for every child/person is to escape/resolve this complete dependence.

The male transexual, for example, who wishes to be female has never detached a sexual sense of himself from that of his mother. In fact the kind of resolution that comes out of the attachment to one's mother will determine how the penis (as a symbol of the male: brother, father etc) is dealt with subsequently.

If for some reason the quest for independence is prevented by the strength of the mother's tie with the child, there will be increased envy of the penis as a weapon of difference with which to oppose her. Thus penis envy is intense in proportion to the power of the child's internal and often idealized image of the mother figure. If this mother is hated and feared it will be extremely difficult for the man or woman to integrate their female self successfully into their personality.

This does mean, however, that it is artificial to abstract female sexuality from each individual's constitutional bisexuality (female and male parts of personality).

Symbolic Disturbance in Girls
Burness Moore (USA), also stressing the importance of the role of the mother, felt that the major work of gender (sexual identity) formation occurs in the first three years of life. Subsequent events, though affecting psycho-sexual function, are not of primary importance.

At this age severe reactions occur to such losses as severe illness, birth defect, surgery, loss of a parent, depression/neglect by the mother. The stability of the child's sense of its own body will be seriously impaired, later to be elaborated in anxiety about a sense of loss

of part of the body, particularly genital (castration anxiety).

The effect of the environment — of which the mother is the foremost representative — outweighs the inherent factors of biological bisexuality.

Observation of babies shows that they have a biological predisposition to develop empathic responses to both sexes. There will, however, be innate differences in the small child to which parents will respond differently. The constancy and quality of the mother's care and experience of her child are basic for the child in establishing a real sense of body image: both what can be seen (as hand and mouth — first objects of concern) and what is unseen but experienced in sensation (vagina).

Moore believes that symbolic disturbance in integration of parts of the body, like breasts and vagina, is more frequent in the girl. This may lead to displacement i.e. transfer of feeling

from the proper object to other parts of the body (for instance this may be elaborated in the adolescent's concern with facial appearance, women's excessive consciousness of fashion, etc).

The little boy's genitals, on the other hand, are very early on a source of self-love and a means of expressing his aggressive feelings. Penis envy becomes acute in the little girl when she discovers that there are sexual differences. Wishing to have a penis may be the desire for a personal pleasure-giving organ which has special powers (such as being able to urinate standing up).

Moore also postulates that penis envy is a substitute for the closeness of the relationship to the mother. This closeness is beginning to loosen with the awareness of sexual differences and the recognition of the presence of the father beyond the exclusive relationship with the mother. The sense of well-

being this relationship provided is thus undermined.

The absolute dependence on the mother in the beginning creates anxiety and the archaic threat of separation as the infant begins to recognise the separate existence of self and mother. This anxiety is the principle feature in spurring the child's drive and aggression to further separate from the mother and master the environment. In this way the penis may be used in a defensive way to break away from the domination of that all-powerful mother.

Environmental and Parental Influences

More than 1,500 people attended this congress, organised by the International Psychoanalysis Association — analysts, students, associate members (analysts who have been trained for less than five years) and guests. Martha Papadakis, a student analyst, talked to Spare Rib about changes in the theory of female sexuality and the implication of these two papers for clinical practice.

Could you say how the study of female sexuality has changed over the last 50–60 years?

One important point is that Freud was writing in a male-dominated culture. Women had a specific role, as accessory to the man. This doesn't invalidate what Freud said but I think it has meant there was an over-emphasis on areas such as the question of penis envy.

In Freud's time and subsequently there was a lot of concern with constitutional factors as determining sexual identity: the importance of innate biological drives in each stage of sexual development. Environmental and parental influences have been stressed in recent research.

People like Stoller, for instance, say that the parents' attitudes are of primary importance: if the parents teach the child abnormal attitudes to itself and don't accept its sexuality, then the child is inevitably profoundly affected, and unlikely to grow up with a clear sense of sexual identity.

Freud tended to believe that in mature female sexuality the vagina replaced the clitoris as an area of sexual excitement. Subsequent research (eg Masters and Johnson) has substantiated that women may have clitoral or vaginal orgasm and that this doesn't seem to be related to neurotic symptoms. So what's called the clitoral-vaginal transfer theory has been questioned.

I'd like to quote Burness Moore on this: "The symbolic significance of the differences between the sexes seems to be

equated by both sexes with implications of superiority or inferiority. Freud's statement that anatomy is destiny does, however, need to be modified to include physiology and cultural experience."

Also, I think it's generally agreed that there's been a lack of emphasis in the Freudian and post-Freudian literature on the pre-genital/pre-phallic phase. Freud spent a lot of time on the Oedipal period, which he said occurred around the fourth to sixth year. A lot of research, for example Klein, has said it occurs much earlier than that.

Can you give a brief definition of the Oedipal conflict?

At the simplest level it's the child's discovery that it is born into a triangular situation as opposed to a two-person (mother-child) situation, ie a father is present. The child begins to feel an attraction to the opposite sex parent in the triangle. The little girl wishes to remove the mother from her position of supremacy with the father and take her place. And likewise for the boy. (This exposition doesn't include the more elaborate problems of the bisexual, however.)

Really, it's the child having to come to terms with the fact that for social and biological reasons (its small age), it cannot have that parent sexually. It has to accept that the parents belong sexually to each other.

How were the papers on female sexuality at this recent conference received?

I think there would have been fundamental agreement with both Smirgel and Moore. A couple of interesting points came up from Brenman, an English analyst. He raised the question of the child's use of his penis to free himself from the primary domination of the mother.

He felt this wasn't essentially a genital resolution, but an aggressive way of breaking free from her. In that sense it was using the penis to dominate rather than to combine in a creative way. This isn't a genuine Oedipal resolution to the problem but rather expresses the fear that precedes that stage.

From then the penis is looked on by the child as something extremely powerful, much-loved and prized — a bit like a motor car, or an emblem of war; but the sexual part of it is diminished because of the aggressive investment in it.

What do you think will be the implications for clinical practice?

Basically, I think less rigidity in understanding sexuality. Mores about sex are altering — what one defines as promiscuity, or

what attitude one takes on / homosexual marriage, etc are facing analysts in this decade in a very real way.

I think there was probably general agreement that there had to be quite a lot of flexibility in how patients with sexual disorders and disturbances are handled and treated — and that one may need to deviate from the classical techniques and strictness of an analytic set-up.

Also mentioned by various people was the importance of the body, not only biologically but speaking a language of its own in the treatment situation. We're only beginning to understand these sorts of things. Analysis has traditionally been concerned with the intellectual and articulate aspect of treatment.

One analyst quoted a situation where he could not move in his chair during the analytic hour because the patient found the movement enormously erotic. This is a very tangible

expression of what may be occurring in a treatment situation.

How the patient relates to the analyst expresses what he or she feels about him or herself physically and sexually. That leads on to the area of what the analyst himself brings to the treatment situation — in other words, his counter-transference: what expectations and attitudes he has to himself sexually; what ideas he has as to whether he's well adjusted; how much he's come to terms with his own deviations; his influence on the patient — and how much he accepts that, or how much he cuts it off or diverts attention because it creates anxiety for himself. So what the analyst brings to the situation himself needs to continue being investigated and understood. □

Ann Scott
Martha Papadakis and Ann Scott would like to emphasise that this account is necessarily brief and introductory.

Since the articles concerning the marketing and efficacy of spermicidal contraceptives were published in *Women's Report* (vol. 2 issue 4) and *Spare Rib* (no 29), the Department of Health has been spurred into action.

Readers may remember that we found the information provided on packets and leaflets to be inadequate and in many cases misleading. Our recommendations were that spermicides should be date stamped, that advertising and information given should be controlled, and that a government health warning should be introduced saying 'This product should not be used without a sheath or a cap'.

The DHSS is taking welcome steps to introduce regulations on advertising, labelling and package leaflets, to provide that they "should not give the impression, either directly or indirectly, that they are a reliable means of contraception when used on their own and that such advertisements must contain a warning that the product should be used only in conjunction with another compatible method such as a sheath or cap".

The DHSS is also proposing that leaflets should be required to carry a warning: "When avoidance of pregnancy is important, the choice of contraceptive method should be made in consultation with a doctor". This is a big step forward for the Department, which just one short year ago commented to me: "The best way of ensuring that people use the contraceptive which is both the most effective and the most suitable for their individual requirements is to concentrate on education about the various contraceptive methods and supplies available".

Need for Legislation

The Department's proposals outlined above were sent to 'interested parties' in May for comment. It seems likely that the regulations on advertising will come into effect by the end of the year. As the manufacturing and distribution process takes some time, it would be impracticable for labelling regulations to come into force as soon as that, but hopefully they will do so soon after.

It is not surprising that some 'interested parties' are concerned that there is seen to be a need for legislation. Potter and Clarke, the manufacturers of C-Film, say that their product already states that it should not be used alone if the avoidance of pregnancy is imperative.

This, of course, evades the crucial point that: while they indeed suggest double precau-

SPERMICIDES: DHSS TO TAKE ACTION

tions if avoidance of pregnancy is 'imperative', the reassuring tone of the rest of the instructions heavily counterbalances this.

Rendells — who say on their pessary packets: "No further precautions of any kind need be taken" — are particularly unhappy. They took the trouble, following our article, to write a long, indignant letter to *Spare Rib*, attempting to justify their position. The letter, from Ms Jean Redman, is unfortunately too long to be printed in full. Here are a few tit-bits:-

"... Certainly chemical contraceptives and every other sort of contraceptive are sold for gain. If there was no profit to make, then nobody would take the trouble to manufacture or market any contraceptive in the first instance. It is crass to claim that women's interests are, at best, of secondary importance". If profit comes first, then women can but come second — at best.

"... Your contributors would not survive for very long in the manufacture and marketing of contraceptives. Anything which might be construed by the Grundys as corrupting the morals of the young... is calculated to bring such a storm of protest about your ears that the company probably could not survive. Why not start your own mail-order company, run it your way, and find out?" (This statement is made to justify the mail-order companies' constant references to people using their products as married couples.)

'Anti-Abortion Fanatics'

A similar statement is made to justify the exclusion of a rider to the effect that two pessaries should be used after an abortion or a D & C: "... I should have had to deal with the anti-abortion fanatics for even mentioning their pet obsession. Mention of D & C would bring thousands of letters asking what it means".

But surely, a firm with women's interests at heart would be only too happy to brave anti-abortion fanatics and provide women with informative instructions. After all, they would be helping to prevent unwanted pregnancies!

Ms Redman makes a great effort to show that even though spermicides do not necessarily kill or immobilise sperm, most of them (ie those that contain 'surface active agents') cause

'mechanical damage' to sperms, which thus prevents conception. This of course sounds all very well — but does not appear to account for the high failure rates when spermicides are used alone. Furthermore, one wonders at the possibility of mechanical damage affecting the foetus.

She reassures us that "Heat and damp do not change the effectiveness of Rendells. I imagine the same would be true of other suppositories and foam tablets marketed in the UK today". These reassuring statements do not, however, tally with the most recent *Which?* report¹: "Suppositories and foaming tablets will deteriorate quickly if kept in a hot or damp place".

Ideal with Sheath or IUD?

Our article stated that Rendells pessaries were claimed to be ideal with the sheath or IUD, and we therefore posed the question: were they trying to imply that their product was less than ideal for the cap? From Ms Redman we learn that indeed "Rendells are not recommended for use with a cap. This is not mentioned in the directions for use because when a cap is fitted by a doctor a different type of spermicide is recommended for use. In any event, why anybody should dream of wrapping a Rendells in a cap defeats me".

Two points need making here. First, one wonders how a doctor is supposed to know about the unsuitability of Rendells with

the cap. Maybe by extra-sensory perception. Rendells must be reminded that doctors are not necessarily well-informed on the subject of contraception, and in many cases their knowledge leaves much to be desired.

In any case, even if a doctor does recommend a particular brand of pessary for use with a cap, the free availability of such products over the counter accompanied by clever promotional blurb can, as already described, lead even the most sceptical woman into using an unsuitable pessary with the cap.

Secondly, it is disturbing to discover that Rendells appear to be ignorant of the fact that it is standard practice to use pessaries with the cap when a woman has intercourse more than three hours after inserting it. Furthermore, the makers of Staycept pessaries, which are used by the FPA, actually recommend what Ms Redman finds defeating: that a pessary should be placed inside the cap before it is put in position!

Fortunately, the DHSS takes a different view from that of Rendells. It is, after all, proposing to bring in regulations. We can only hope that the regulations will be introduced without delay. No doubt it will be up to us to make sure that the manufacturers actually adhere to them. □

Jill Rakusen

¹ *Sex with Health: the Which? guide to contraceptives, abortion and sex-related diseases, published by Consumers' Association.*



In the original article printed in *Women's Report*, a chart was to have been printed giving a breakdown of information on each of the products examined. Unfortunately there was not enough room for this but only for a shortened version. It was missed off the re-print in *Spare Rib* altogether. Here we print the full version, but for the perils of C-film, see *SR* 29. Note that I have included details of sheath packaging as well.

MAKE	MARKETED BY	MANUFACTURER	COMMENTS
1. CREAMS/JELLIES			
DURAGEL	PREMIER FPA	LR INDUSTRIES	'Accepted by the FPA for use in clinics with diaphragms, caps and protectives'. Good instructions and diagram but does not warn about douching.
ORTHOGYNOL (JELLY OR CREAM)	PREMIER FPA	ORTHO	'For use with a diaphragm, or sheath or other barrier device'.
PRECEPTIN GEL	PREMIER	ORTHO	'For use without a diaphragm. Ideal for women who find other methods unacceptable or as extra protection for women who forget to take one or more contraceptive tablets'. 'For use alone' (on packet). 'Has unique synthetic base which replaces the barrier function of the diaphragm'. Does say 'do not douche' for at least 6-8 hours.
DELFIN CREAM	PREMIER	ORTHO	Same as above except for last quote; 'contains the most active spermicide agent available'. (It failed both the <i>Which?</i> spermicide tests in 1971)
PRENTIF SPERMICIDAL COMPOUND	PREMIER LAMBERT FPA	PRENTIF LTD	'For use with all types of approved contraceptive appliances'; does talk about it being used alone, 'should this method be found to be satisfactory and the attendant possibility of failure be accepted'. No explanation how to use, nor about douching.
RENDELL CREAM	PREMIER	RENDELL LTD	'For use with caps'; 'approved by FPA'. Talks about douching, but no warning.
2. TABLETS/PESSARIES			
RENDELL PESSARIES	LAMBERT PREMIER FPA	RENDELL LTD	'No further precautions of any kind need be taken'. Instructions how to insert and how much time effective: 'if ejaculation does not take place within 30 minutes another should be inserted. For a few months after childbirth two Rendells should be used'. Does not mention douching; offer Nurse Drew's advice.
GENEXOL PESSARIES	LAMBERT PREMIER FPA	RENDELL LTD	'No further precautions of any kind need be taken'; does not mention douching. Same instructions as above, although more expensive; they don't offer Nurse Drew!
RENDELL FOAM	PREMIER	RENDELL LTD	'Ideal with sheath and IUD' but doesn't mention cap. Do give instructions and say shouldn't be swallowed, but don't mention douching.
ORTHOFORMS PESSARIES	PREMIER LAMBERT FPA	ORTHO	Brief instructions; doesn't mention it should be used with anything while saying 'will kill a volume of sperm of the equivalent to at least 30 times the normal male ejaculate': misleading by implication.
GYNOMIN TABLETS	PREMIER LAMBERT FPA	COATES & COOPER	'May be used alone when a simple method . . . required'; 'additional protection is afforded when used in conjunction with approved appliances; does mention douching — but suggests delaying for only one hour.
3. AEROSOLS			
EMKO FOAM	LAMBERT FPA	EMKO CO (USA)	Instructions re. douching and when to apply, but don't mention what to use it with, if anything, and no instructions re. use with cap.
DELFIN FOAM	LAMBERT PREMIER FPA	ORTHO	Instructions re. douching and when to apply but claims to be 'at least as reliable as the diaphragm or sheath'; 'has over 50% more sperm-killing ingredient than other foams'; doesn't mention how to use it with a cap but does say 'may be used with IUD or sheath or by a woman who forgets to take one or more contraceptive pills'.
4. CONDOMS			
SHEATH	LOVECRAFT	LAVETRA (GERMAN)	No instructions. No date limit.
SHEATH	PREMIER	SAGAMI (JAPANESE)	No instructions. No date limit. Does say 'electronically tested'.
SHEATH (REGARD)	PREMIER	DANISH	No instructions. Gives date limit.
SHEATH (CONCEPTROL SHIELDS)	LOVECRAFT	ORTHO	British Standard. Gives date limit and instructions.
SHEATH (DUREX)	PREMIER LAMBERT FPA	LR INDUSTRIES	British Standard. Gives date limit and instructions.
SHEATH & PESSARIES (TWO'S COMPANY)	FPA		British Standard. Date limit given and detailed instructions including diagrams. On pessaries, state plainly 'not to be swallowed'.
5. TIPS			
AMERICAN TIP (FITS ON END OF THE PENIS)	LAMBERT	LAMBERT?	No instructions on or in the packet and they have to be bought a dozen at a time. Their advertising leaflet does say they 'should not be used unless the wearer is circumcised' and 'even after careful fitting it can slip off'.
AMERICAN TIP (FITS ON END OF THE PENIS)	PREMIER	PREMEX	No instructions on or in the packet whatsoever. Their advertising leaflet does say it's best for the man to be circumcised, and suggests using a chemical formula too, but this information is not incorporated with the product. Highly dangerous!



PHOTOS FROM BIG FLAME PAMPHLET PORTUGAL: A BLAZE OF FREEDOM

PORTUGAL: POPULAR POWER?

"What political group are you from?"

"We're from the women's movement in England and we've come to Portugal for the Week of Action organised by the MLM (the autonomous women's movement — 30-40 strong in Lisbon and Oporto)".

Sheila Young describes a visit to Portugal at the beginning of August.

The response was usually a blank stare or an attack on the MLM. "They're just bourgeois women — they're lesbians, of course I sympathise but you can't expect the people to relate to them — they're divisive — there's no point in concentrating on abortion when we've got to defend the revolution. If the fascists get back into power there

won't be any legal abortion anyway — first things first."

When the MLM held a demonstration in January to make public the many ways in which women in Portugal are oppressed it was reported in the press as a striptease and thousands of men turned up to mock observe and physically attack the women. Women were beaten, stripped and insulted and the kids with them were attacked.

The situation of women in Portugal has been appalling. Portugal has the highest infant mortality rate in Europe. There are almost no free maternity and medical services — housing conditions are bad, only 20% of dwellings have a kitchen, lavatory and bathroom. There are almost no nursery provisions. Abortion is illegal and punishable by up to 8 years' imprisonment.

With men working as immigrant labour elsewhere in Europe and serving in the colonial army, large numbers of women had

been taken into the industrial and agricultural labour force as low paid workers; although in theory there is now equal pay, this won't be easy to maintain in a situation of economic instability, boycott by the EEC countries and the return of male workers from the colonies.

The subjective experience of being a woman 'revolutionary tourist' in Portugal was a bit like taking an extended walk along a building site wearing lots of make-up and a mini skirt. All the foreign women were continually hassled by men — on one co-operative farm the situation got so bad that a meeting of foreigners and representatives of the co-op was called to discuss the problem. We heard that at the co-operatively-run motel where foreign women had been working as volunteers they'd had similar problems. I felt I had to struggle all the time to be treated as a person and not as a naive woman/sex object.

At the Armed Forces Movement meeting for foreigners, after a long series of questions about the general situation, a German woman asked the captain from the 5th division what the AFM attitude was to abortion. What did the AFM think about the report in *República* that there were still 150,000 illegal abortions every year in Portugal?

"We are here to express and effect the wishes of the people — this is the meaning of *poder popular* (popular power). When we know that many people want to legalise abortion we will make sure that this happens."

We tried to explain that 150,000 women getting illegal abortions were in effect demanding legal and safe abortions. The captain was cornered but couldn't take the point — of course the 5th division supports the legalisation of abortion but we are not here to discuss abortion in detail (roughly translated to mean abortion isn't politics

with a capital 'P'). At the end of the meeting the captain came up to me and as I tried to make our point again he patted me on the cheek and told me not to worry.

Why then did I and other women who visited Portugal come away thinking that the revolution really might change things for women and that the MLM could play an important part in this?

Women were not Intimidated

Basically because in the process of social and economic change that is taking place in Portugal women are playing a large part in the daily struggle and through this are having to question their roles.

In the co-operative farm we worked on there were about 10 women and 40 men. The men worked in the fields and the women worked in the house and the fields. At midday the women cooked a huge dinner for 50+ people. Big arguments developed because the men got very angry if their dinner was not ready as soon as they got back from the fields, and said that the women didn't really work hard at all. The women were not at all intimidated and stuck together against the men, suggesting that the men should take a turn in the kitchens and see if the work was so easy.

Ideas about medicine in the occupied clinic in Lisnave — which provides free treatment, mainly to mothers and children — were the same as those we've developed in the women's movement here and they really seem to be putting them into practice.

The emphasis is on preventive medicine. Doctors must talk to patients as people and explain what they are doing so that a visit to the clinic is also a learning situation and women can teach other women what they have learned about nutrition, hygiene, contraception etc.

In housing struggles, the Comicones da Moradores (neighbourhood commissions), and in the occupation of houses to be used as creches women have played an important part.

There have been many strikes and factory occupations involving women, particularly in the textile industry. Often the women do piecework and the foreman is a man. This can mean that a woman's wages will depend on how she gets on with the foreman.

The situation in the textile factories now looks as though it is about to reach a crisis point. The EEC, pushed mainly by Wilson, has put a tariff of 10p per item on all Portuguese cotton goods. Many of these factories are in small villages in the church-dominated north of Portugal, and if women are pushed out of work with no understanding of why this is happening their response is likely to be to join the forces of reaction. This seems to be a clear example of a situation in which an explicitly feminist movement could play an important role.

Thugs with Alsations and Guns

The occupation of the Sogantal factory brings out many of the contradictions of the situation

of Portuguese women. The MLM has been involved in helping the women at Sogantal and during the week of action we saw the play the workers had made of their own struggle. Sogantal was a French factory producing track suits. Over a year ago the boss tried to introduce speedups and lay offs, and when the women refused to co-operate he threatened total redundancy and closure.

The women went on strike and picketed the factory for several weeks. One weekend the boss sent in 12 thugs, with alsations and guns, who broke through the gates and tried to move the equipment out. Everyone in the village mobilised and the women took over the factory. They have continued to produce goods and at one time were selling clothes to their friends when other markets were blocked.

But now they are stuck — they need money to buy raw materials to continue production. If they were a co-operative they could get help from the state but they can't legally form a co-op without the consent of their husbands and fathers and the

men are refusing to sign.

The MLM has a real role to play in making sure that women recognise the important part they are playing in the struggle and not allowing their demands to be seen as somehow secondary; this also involves women knowing that other women all over the country are engaged in similar struggles and facing similar problems. This could mean more intensive propaganda work at a national level or greater involvement at the base. But it has to happen — as one woman in the MLM put it "If people don't see their everyday lives changing because of the revolution, they'll get discouraged by inflation and hardship. After 40 years of Fascism they'll want to go back to having a Daddy figure to rely on. A factory occupation is important but a woman sleeps with her husband every night and looks after the kids every day. Those are the things that have to be revolutionised for people to believe in and fight for the revolution." □



Before April 25: demonstrating against the colonial wars

LESBIANS IN ROME: ALL OUR CHILD- HOOD WE ARE TOLD TO KEEP AWAY FROM MEN

Maria and Giulia fell in love while still at school in Rome. As lesbians they lived isolated and afraid. But the women's movement has meant the beginnings of gay consciousness for many Italian lesbians. Rosalind Carne reports.

Maria and Giulia fell in love while still at school. They spent every possible spare moment together and made plans to share a flat when they were old enough to leave home. Maria's family, though Italian and Catholic, were fairly untraditional about such matters. They had suspicions about their daughter's relationship but preferred to let them pass. She'd get over it, meet a nice young man. It was just a matter of time.

Giulia's case was different. Before meeting Maria she had already become engaged to the requisite 'nice young man'. But now everything was changed. She couldn't go through with it and told him everything. Insulted and horrified he informed her parents. A long battle had started.

Giulia was snatched out of school and locked in the house for nine months. Twice she managed to escape with Maria and twice they were brought back. All that time she was beaten every day. The family treated her like a prisoner. She was given extra chores, though she didn't mind that. At least it was something to do. Standing by the window, washing up the dinner plates, her eyes would remain fixed across the street to the spot where Maria would

stand at the same time each day for a chance to see her lover. Eventually the family gave up and Maria and Giulia were able to live together.

Happily ever after? Not quite... or not yet. As lesbians in one of Europe's most 'macho' cities they lived isolated and afraid. They both had jobs in the same area but chose to live at the opposite end of town so they could be near their only two other friends. They joined FUORI ('Fronte Unitario Omosessuale Rivoluzionario Italiano' — Fuori means 'Out' in Italian) and through Fuori came to the Women's Movement, where they began to find support.

Struggling Alone?

The story is true and it is characteristic. The Women's Movement has meant the beginnings of gay consciousness for hundreds, perhaps thousands of Italian lesbians. But there must be many more who struggle alone. Their oppression is such that even the feminist magazine *Effe* has so far refused to print anything on the subject for fear of offending the Communist Party.

Giovanna Pala, a lesbian member of the Movimento Femminista Romano is currently writing such an article, but she admits: "If I want them to publish it I have to be careful. I'm trying to be a bit indirect, a bit ironic. At the moment it's the only way."

If a lesbian is lucky enough to get a job, the situation remains gloomy. A friend of Giovanna's was recently sacked from her teaching post because she was homosexual. When asked why she was sacked she was refused an explanation. There is no single teaching union in Italy and she knew her particular union would give her no help. Gay pride is still in its infancy in Italy and you can't do much alone. Giovanna doesn't know anyone who has come out at work and she tells stories of friends who pretend she's a man when she rings them up at the office.

There are no bars for gay women in Rome. One woman tried to start one but was forced to give up after continual harassment from the police on the pretence of looking for drugs. There is one private club frequented by homosexuals, but it is expensive and tends to be a predominantly male retreat.

Avoiding Gay/Straight Rivalry
But more women are coming out as homosexual—if not at work or to their parents at least among friends and in women's groups. For a country like Italy this is a big step forward. At last there is a way for them to

meet other women. They organise dances and they lose their fear. Women are beginning to see lesbianism as a political choice, a sexuality defined by women, for women. They are setting up communes and developing solidarity and sisterhood.

It was this that most impressed me when I spoke to the lesbians in Rome. They give each other tremendous support and seem to avoid the gay/straight rivalry often found in women's groups in England. Within the women's movement in Rome there are no strictly lesbian groups but the women do not see this as necessarily a bad thing. By associating themselves with a total struggle against sexual oppression they avoid the dangers of gay separatism, and many previously heterosexual women are beginning to rethink the nature of their sexuality.

They are learning the importance of warmth and physical contact among women and many are coming out to join their lesbian sisters. Giovanna estimated that about 70 per cent of the women in the movement had had homosexual relationships, and not many of them return to heterosexuality afterwards.

The apparent absence of bisexual women seems a peculiarly Italian characteristic. Many of the women I know in England relate sexually to both sexes—queers to the straights and cop-outs to the gays. But this seems foreign to the Roman scene, and Giovanna was surprised to hear me speak of women who, after coming out as gay, continue to relate sexually to men. The ability to have loving sexual relationships with both women and men seemed something of a mystery to her. Perhaps the clue to this lies in the macho values of the majority of Italian men.

Unfair to Criticise

As in England, butch/fem role playing is often apparent among Italian lesbians. Giovanna felt it was unfair to criticise.

"I really don't think we can make judgements about what women look like. In Italy, to be a man is a positive thing. Some women find it easier to be positive if they act and dress like men."

But isn't that what the Movement's about, I asked—the realisation that to be a woman is as 'positive' as to be a man? She agreed, adding that among younger lesbians, role playing was less apparent. It is crucial in the political development of Italian lesbians that they are beginning to see themselves as women-identified women.

I asked about that strangle-

hold on every progressive movement in the country, the Roman Catholic church. On a personal level it seems to be less of an obstacle than one might expect, though most feminists tend to abandon their religion. When a Catholic friend of Giovanna's confessed her homosexuality, the priest was surprisingly sympathetic.

But then, as Giovanna pointed out, the Church itself is very homosexual. Many of the priests are gay. Nor does the Catholic education do much to discourage lesbians. "All our childhood we are told again and again to keep away from men—men are wicked, men are bad", said one woman.

So gay consciousness is growing and it's good to see it developing as an integral part of the women's movement. Fuori has tried to encourage women into its ranks, but mostly from a sense of duty. Like the English CHE (Campaign for Homosexual Equality) most of the members are uninterested in the specific problems of female homosexuals, and lesbians who have any political analysis of their position prefer to join a women's group. Many are active in the wages for housework campaign and the fight for free abortion and contraception.

Looking beyond the immediate problems they see a common basis to female and gay oppression, thrown into sharp relief by the specifics of the Italian situation. Only 17 per cent of Italian women work outside the home and it is hard for women to get jobs. A lesbian, above all, needs to be economically independent. The support is mutual and Italian women are beginning to see that discrimination against lesbians is discrimination against all women.

They still have a long way to go. There have been no public demonstrations and no direct political action as yet. But it is on the way. When Maria and Giulia set up house together, Giulia's family tried to sue Maria's under an ancient Italian law of corruption. There are no laws against homosexuality in Italy so this was their only method of attack. The law states that anyone, of any age, can be accused of corrupting the morals of another person. The sex is immaterial though it seems to be used exclusively in cases of homosexuality.

The case is still being heard but an unfavourable verdict could be the catalyst to draw the women onto the streets. From the personal will spring the political, and in a sense it already has. Lesbians in Italy are shedding their guilt and learning to love one another without shame, in itself a political act. □

CLASSIFIEDS

COURSES

Women in History: a weekly course about women from the Middle Ages. Emphasis on 19th and 20th centuries, and on women in this country. Working Mens College, Crowndale Rd, NW1, 6-8pm from Monday September 22. For more details ring Sally Alexander 01-828 3735

GROUPS

SECONDARY SCHOOL teachers interested in forming group to work in area of integrated studies concerned with sexism racism and class-bias and ageism (early years of secondary) please contact Scilla Alvarado 01-602 5859, 98b Sinclair Rd, W14

West London women's group seeks new member(s). Phone 01-731 1003

We are starting a Women's Centre in Worthing and we need help/advice. Please ring Bobby at Worthing 66125 or write to Ena, at 31 Clive Ave, Goring-by-Sea

Homosexual/Bisexual women join the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. CHE is your voice—make it louder! Meetings and socials throughout Britain. Send SAE 9 x 4" to CHE (332), 28 Kennedy St, Manchester 2

JOBS

Labour MP wants part-time secretary. Must be able to work independently, flexi-working hours. Write to Maureen Conquhoun, House of Commons, SW1

Woman wanted to help run Romsay Town Cafe, Cambridge. Loosely organised community based project in existence for three years. Live in or near. Self-supporting. Strong women's group. Must be seen to be appreciated (us that is not you!). Ring or write 282 Mill Road, 0223 42118

JOBS WANTED

26 French woman looking for part-time job translating (French, English, Italian) typing etc. if possible in feminist group. Malville, 60a Kingsland High St, E8 2JP

Woman artist (29) wants part-time/full-time job in London area—speaks four languages, good typing, anything interesting considered. Box no 400

BOOKS ETC

MEDICINE IN SOCIETY: a marxist Journal of health studies; Issue 5 contains articles on trades unions in the NHS by Ester Brookstone (NUPE) and Hugh Faulkner (ASTMS-MPU), Abortion Law reform and Ivan Illich's "Medical Nemesis". 25p post free, or £1 annual subscription, from Marxists in Medicine, 74 Brookdale Rd, London E17

Nuclear weapons still threaten everyone—keep in touch with latest developments by reading CND's newspaper SANITY. 10p a copy or £1 a year. Write to CND, Eastbourne House, Bullards Place, London E2

Rising Free, left-wing bookshop. 197 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1. Large selection of radical women's literature with mail order service. Including: VD HANDBOOK 8p, PAMPHLET OF THE FIRST WOMEN AND HEALTH CONFERENCE SHEFFIELD 15p, CIRCLE ONE, a women's guide to self health and sexuality 80p

RESEARCH MATERIAL ON WOMAN AND SOCIETY. Enquire for specialist catalogues. TARA BOOKS LTD, Shortacre Park Rd, Winchester, Hants. Winchester 2239

MOVE Publication Bristol Gay Women's Liberation Sample 20p Women's Centre, 11 Waverley Rd, Redland, Bristol

New Design WL Badge 14p (incl. postage). Stop Rape American pamphlet on self-defence for women (illustrated) 26p (Incl. postage) from Sisterhood Books c/o 22 Great Windmill St, London W1

Anti-Apartheid News, Journal of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. The only newspaper devoted to reporting the facts of the situation in Southern

Africa, and the campaigns being waged internationally against white supremacy. Ten issues per year, annual subscription rates £1.35 UK from 89 Charlotte St, London W1P 2DQ

FOR GAY WOMEN: THE GIRL'S GUIDE 1975. The all new, pocket size, discreet, international bar/club guide and complete directory: organisations, centres, publications etc. All Britain plus 25 other countries. 1500 listings. £1.00 only from: The Girl's Guide, 103 Hammersmith Rd, London W14 (mail order only). Also at: Compendium, 240 Camden High St, NW1; Sterling's Bookshop, 57 St Martin's Lane, WC2; Marmac Books, 56 Gloucester Rd, SW7. And on sale at the SAPPHO discos.

SAPPHO, the only lesbian feminist magazine in Europe, 40p inc post, 39 Wardour St, London W1V 3HA. Meetings held every Tuesday 7.30pm upstairs room, The Chestow Pub, Chestow Place, London W2, off Westbourne Grove 40p admission for non-subscribers

Women's Liberation literature or any books. Send SAE for free booklist to H Rutovitz, 31 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh

FOR SALE

KIDS clothes made to order. Cushions too, in all shapes and sizes. Sue Pontet, 18 New Row, Perth PH1 5QA

LOST CONTACTS

Niamh O'Sullivan please contact Rosie at Spare Rib urgently 01-437 2070

Woman from Sheffield who replied to Box no 341 please reply again

THERAPY

PRIMAL THERAPY write Jenny James, Atlantis, Burtonport, Letterkenny, Co Donegal, Eire

Woman psychotherapist (Jungian) now has vacancies in Highgate area. Tel: 01-348 5593

RE-EVALUATION COUNSELLING—peer self-help therapy which relieves emotional distress thereby enabling one to overcome rigid patterns of behaviour. A class for women starts in October. Call Margaret Green (01-624 9131).

I'd like to contact people who've been through primal therapy. All letters answered Box no 406

ACCOMMODATION

Single parent offers share in house and garden to GERMAN or French speaking single parent family. Ring 01-977 226 evenings

Flat, N8, 2nd woman. Single room £32 pcm. Jean 01-348 5118 (6pm)

Modernised pied a terre WC1 semi-basement bedsitter (wall bed, fitted carpets curtains etc) bathroom, kitchen/pantry overlooking plant area. Leasehold 36 years £8,750. Enquiries 01-278 1501

ACCOM. WANTED

CAREERS WORKER seeks friendly place within 15 miles Accrington, January onwards. Own room essential Allergic to damp or mouldering dwellings. Could pay deposit or retainer. Box no 408

COMMUNES ETC

Mixed group trying to set up an active non-sexist community/commune in the country. Interested? Box no 394

Community started—interested in occupational therapy and shopfront and group work. Box no 409

Dave (25) seeks radical non-sexist people who are interested in communal living. Box no 401

People seek others to buy outright share large house in South London. Must have/be able to borrow approx. £2,500 for own room/share communal living space and garden Box no 341

PERSONAL

GAY professional girl needs to meet similar in West/Central Scotland. Box no 405

LESBIAN 18 would like to meet girls 20 upwards in Somerset area. Please enclose photo. Car helpful. Box no 404

LIBRAN ARTIST seeks intelligent extra large mother earth lady for work and companionship. Genuine replies only please. Box no 403

I am a Portuguese guy and face returning to Portugal, the army and fighting against my friends. Is there any British woman who will marry me so that I can stay in England? No involvement. Box no 410

Dave rejects male/female stereotypes, seeks humorous literary/musical woman comrade Manchester area. Box no 371

Homosexual women and men can ring Icebreakers on 01-274 9590 every evening of the year between 7.30 and 10.30 to talk over their problems with other gay people

Female/female exclusive introductions highly confidential service for release, friendship liberation etc. SAE —'Lesbos and Ariadne', The Golden Wheel, Liverpool L15 3HT

ASTROLOGY

FEMINIST ASTROLOGER: for a thorough analysis of your birthchart or an answer to any problem including health, ring Allison 01-960 2723

EVENTS

Fundraising disco for the Working Women's Charter Campaign. Bring your friends and have a rave up. Sols Arms Pub, 77 Hampstead Road, NW1 (Warren St tube) 7.30-12.30. 50p Saturday 4th October

Dirty Mary and an egg is not a chicken to be shown at a late night women's evening at the Paris Pullman cinema Drayton Gdns, S Kensington 11pm Nov 5th

RIDING THE ELEVATOR INTO THE SKY A reading of the work of Anne Sexton with personal responses is at the New Little Theatre, 16-18 Upper St Martins Lane, London WC2 (240 0660) on Saturday October 4 at 6.15pm, the first anniversary of her death. Contact: Valerie Sinason 794 8051 or Irving Weinman 602 2619.

JOINT PUBLIC MEETING ON EQUAL PAY organised by Acton/Ealing women's group, Ealing Trades Council, AUEW. Speaker Joan Maynard MP followed by discussion groups and Broadside Theatre Group. Ealing Town Hall (Princes Room), W5. Thursday October 23, 7.45pm

If you want to join or start a group, find work, a travel companion, or a missing friend, start a household or share a house, have something to sell or swap . . . then run your own Classified Ad.

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CHRIS DAVIES (REPORT)

SOGAT

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Dirty Mary is a film in French by Nelly Kaplan, about a village prostitute's revenge on the local populace. It's a comedy. An egg is not a chicken is a half-hour film produced by a new group called *Newsreel*. The main political event covered is the Abortion march of last June 21st. Both these films will be showing on 5 November at the Paris Pullman cinema, Drayton Gdns, South Kensington. 01-373 5958. The programme will begin at 11pm and the cinema will be entirely run by women. Seats are £1.00 plus 10p membership of the club to be joined half an hour in advance.

Info...

Wisty Hoyland is on holiday so Odds and Sods will return next month. Meanwhile we are printing some useful addresses and phone numbers:
Scottish Women's Liberation Centre, 4 Fleming Place, St

Andrews, Fife.
Manchester Women's Centre, 218 Upper Brooke Street, Manchester 13. Tel: 061 273 2287.
Birmingham WL Newsletter Collective, 37 Trafalgar Road, Mosley, Birmingham 13.
London WL Workshop, 38 Earlham Street, WC2. Tel: 01 836 6081.

NEWS

THOSE POOR, SEXIST, SAD ISOLATED VICARS

A woman journalist who accompanied the Archbishop of Canterbury on a visit to the Pope was ordered out of the Sistine Chapel on the grounds that her presence sullied the atmosphere.

Ms Ann Cheetham, a freelance journalist, thus described the church's deep-seated objection to women's physical make-up at a "celebration" in St Martin's in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London on August 7. It was organised by the Christian Parity Group, a specifically Christian group working for men and women's liberation.

It was a hot and highly charged evening at St Martin's as hundreds of men and women joined in what was billed as a Free For All—A Celebration of Man's Liberation (Including Woman). It was also the Christian Parity Group's response to the Church of England's ruling that the ordination of women was fine in principle but not in practice.

There was a lot of "sharing of feelings and experiences" led by Dr Una Kroll, the women's rights candidate in the last General Election and co-ordinator of the Parity Group, who wafted around barefoot in a magnificent blue and white flowered robe, introducing the different turns from a raised platform beneath the altar.

Women vented frustration at the church: "I have wanted to be an ordained minister ever since the age of six when I held services with my dolls" and "I want so desperately to find what Christ wants me to be and not what men want me to be." The men were full of shame: "My priesthood has been bought at the expense of women."

The performances were particularly well conceived and performed. There was folk singing, Robin Morgan's poetry and a heavily symbolic mime depicting both the debasement and idealisation of women—but the group was hopeful about change.

Not everyone shared their

spirit. One woman declared that the evening had been moving but "It's still the church, still separate and not all about women and people," she went on.

"If only one could get at those poor, sexist, isolated, sad vicars all over the country."

As if to prove her point there followed a rendering of the curiously inappropriate Magnificat, a psalm distinguished among other things for its male symbolism—"Holy is his name and his mercy is on them that fear him" etc. Apart from that the celebration did all it could to right the balance of centuries of man's domination in things spiritual. □

Lucy Hodges

SEX EQUALITY ETC.

Celebrating International Women's Year and an exorbitant increase in postage costs are four stamps commemorating the bicentenary of novelist Jane Austen's birth on October 22.

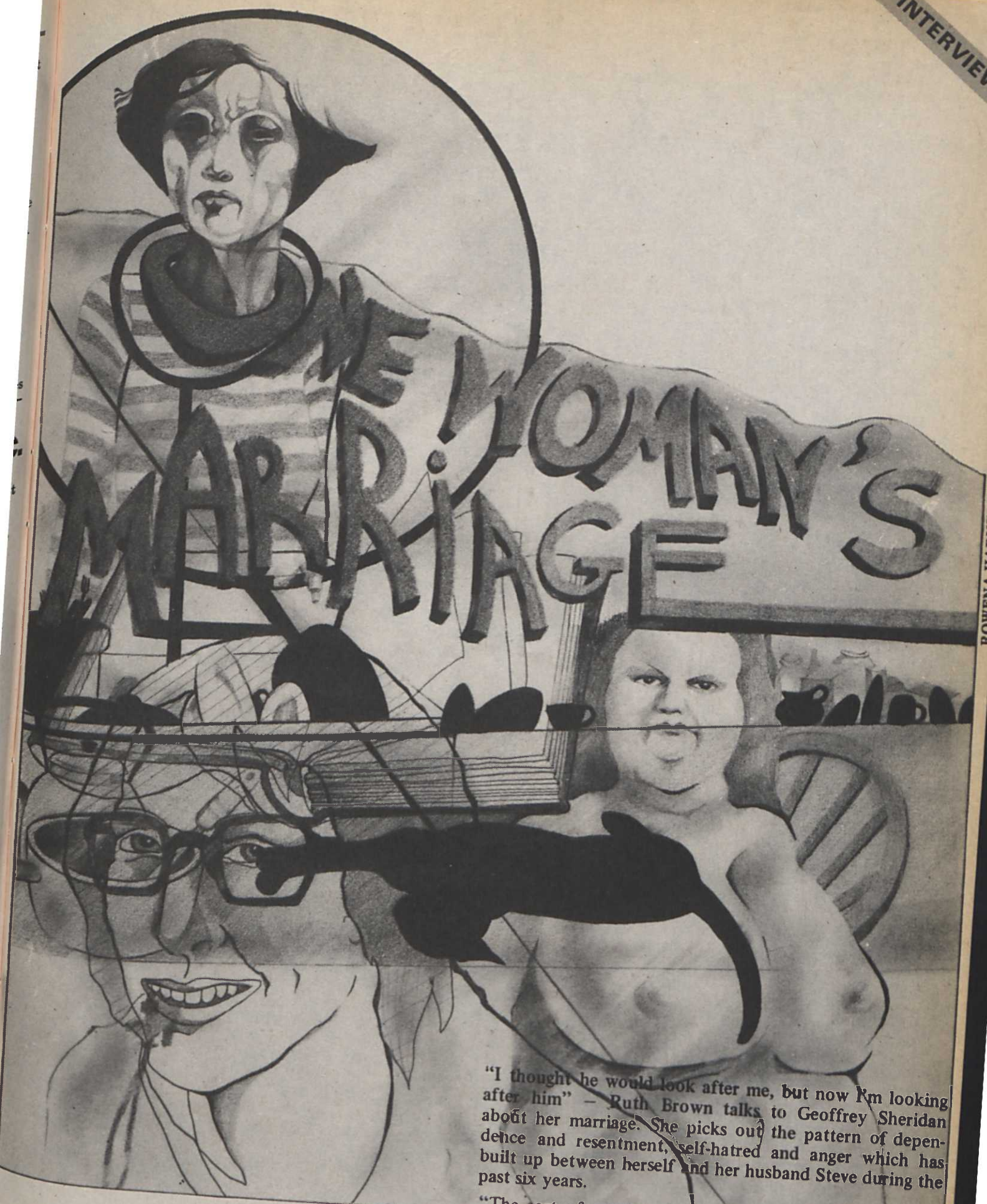
The occasion marks the first ever appearance of a woman author on British Post Office stamps and coincides with the efforts of governments throughout the world to promote the aims of IWY — sex equality etc — via special stamps.

Liberia has issued Soviet spacewoman Valentina Tereshkova, and Canada Lucy Maud Montgomery, author of *Anne of Green Gables*. According to the Stamp Collecting Promotion Council, Australia produced a "really spectacular" set of six stamps on August 6.

They feature the country's first woman MP, a novelist, a social worker, the first doctor, a suffragette... and "the daughter of the Chief of the Bruny island tribe and possibly the most famous of Tasmanian aborigines".



Bristol Women's Centre, 11 Waverley Road, Bristol 6.
Contact numbers for Women's Aid houses:
Acton 01 567 4708
Chiswick 01 995 4430
Glasgow 041 429 5398
Edinburgh 031 443 9832
Hull 0482 23218
Manchester 061 881 4106



"I thought he would look after me, but now I'm looking after him" — Ruth Brown talks to Geoffrey Sheridan about her marriage. She picks out the pattern of dependence and resentment, self-hatred and anger which has built up between herself and her husband Steve during the past six years.

"The sort of question I ask myself is whether I'm being taken for a complete and utter ride. I support Steve financially. That's unusual I suppose, but I've always worked. I do everything. I spend all my time doing: working, cooking, cleaning. The sort of hours I have to myself to read or to think are like little oases. And yet Steve, who has all the time in the world to think and live the very privileged life of an academic . . . ▶

WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VIBRATORS

As the first company to introduce vibrators into the U.K. and having sold some hundred of thousands, we feel that we know more about them and their use than most.

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The vibrator is designed and is far more effective when used for clitoral stimulation and its undoubted value for this purpose has been well established by Masters and Johnson in their book "An Analysis of Human Sexual Response." In the book they describe how, using a similar device, they were able to bring to orgasm women who have never before reached a climax.

These were extreme cases obviously. Normally, the vibrator is used to provide extra stimulation during love making and is particularly useful where the woman's response tends to be slow. And, of course, it is just as often used purely for personal pleasure.

Finally a word about quality. There are many different makes on the market today, all of similar design, ranging in quality from very good to absolutely useless. We have been selling the same model for seven years and have enough confidence in it to offer you our special 'money refund' service if you are not satisfied.

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"Although I like to think of myself as someone who isn't

"Everything has to stop for Steve if he's busy. He won't do anything at all. When he started off this research for his PhD I said, 'Well, alright, do it, it doesn't bother me. What we will do is what we did when I was a student and you were working.' I did all the housework, all the shopping, and he was sort of occupied. So he said, 'Right oh, fair enough, fine.' And after about two months I noticed great layers of dirt.

"That's what I'd do. That's part of the housework thing. Who gives a bloody toss whether the place is floating in filth? I don't because I'm used to it, in a sense. It would be more familiar because that's what I was used to in my childhood. Cat's piss and rubbish and shit all over the place.

"I hate it. I like everything to be clean and warm and comfortable. I have an obsession now with housework, and people laugh at me about it. I've got this phobia about washing up. If I invite someone round for a meal they've hardly scraped their plate and I'm dragging it into the sink. And I hate myself for it because I'm not like that. That's not my self image.

The ordinary processes of living that other people just do normally are difficult for me, and I've got to keep myself up to a standard because if I didn't I'd drop, really drop, right down to the bottom. A lot of it is to do with the fact that I have lived with squalor, the most appalling and horrible squalor. I've been there before and I don't want to be there again. Lots of people in my family drink a lot. I have this uncle who was on meths.

"We're having constant battles. Steve will say something about Stalin or about the telly and that will start off some debate. And I can see myself becoming increasingly emotional and more irrational, and Steve becoming more and more lucid, and I think: Well, that's not fair, because if I had the time . . . I feel that I'm being put upon.

"But the thing I most resent is the politics. Since Steve has become a left wing activist and I'm not, he's got it all ways on. He has all the time in the world to work on it, so of course he's better than me. He can make me look ridiculous in an argument. Being a communist is not an instinctive thing. You have to put a lot of spadework into it, otherwise you're just an embarrassment. If you join some sort of revolutionary organisation and you don't really know what the bloody hell you're talking about, you're no good to the movement, you're no good to the working class, you're no good to yourself.

"After the fiasco of everything being filthy I said: 'You promised,' and all the rest of it, and he just says things like: 'Look, I haven't got the time. I don't sit around here all day like you did when you were a student, lying in bed until noon, or reading the papers. I work. I'm busy.' — presumably indulging in all this very heavy-handed thinking.

"What he doesn't seem to understand is that he's never had the sort of job I've got. He's always had lecturing where they have three hours for lunch, and if you feel like going home and you've got no teaching, you go home. He doesn't understand the horrible stultifying boredom . . . Sometimes at work I could go home for the week on Tuesday morning. I've done everything, it's all organised, running smoothly. I could put a wax effigy of myself in my office and just fuck off. He doesn't understand that, and it's not because he doesn't but because he won't.

"Steve was sort of solid. He seemed three dimensional. Very reliable. He had a good job, compared with the rootless hobos I spent all my spare time with. His social background is lower-middle class, upwardly socially mobile as they say, while my background is working class. He seemed quite a good catch, if you want to put it in those terms.

"I've been married for six years. I was working when I got married, and then I became a student.

"I thought I could depend on him and he would sort me out and help me. And he has. I went to college. I have a well-paid job. It's a horrible irony, isn't it? I thought he would look after me, but now I'm looking after him — in every sense. I make the social contacts. All our close friends are my friends. Steve is very critical. I've never heard him say of anyone that he liked them or admired them. There's always got to be some great damning qualification.

"I do go out a lot more on my own now than I used to. I am by

nature fairly gregarious. I started going over to this pub because I thought it was a really grotty little pub, which it is, and it's the sort of pub where you never meet anyone you know. You can be anonymous and just have a drink. Of course, it wasn't like that at all, and now I know about 20 people in there. I'm quite friendly with them. They're not censorious. They don't set themselves up in judgement or anything like that.

"I suppose if I went into a smart downtown pub on my own I wouldn't have a quiet time . . . Oh Christ, if you can't go into a bloody pub on your own because you're a woman you might as well chuck it all in. Why should you think what people think? They can think what they like. If they think I'm on the game, fuck them, let them think that.

"Steve puts a very high premium on fidelity. Any discussion along the lines of extra-marital relations just couldn't happen. If Steve thought I'd ever slept with anyone that would be it, and I really think he means that. There's only one occasion when he slept with someone else, a rather squalid incident. The circumstances were bizarre, in which lots of people might have reacted like that.

"My own record is pretty good. I suppose I put a value on fidelity, too. I'm very jealous and I wouldn't like it if I thought Steve was having it off with some girl. I suppose I'd feel threatened; that he might leave me. If I felt there was no danger of that I wouldn't mind. I might mind, though. I might mind that the few precious hours Steve could be spending cleaning out the kitchen or defrosting the fridge he was indulging in orgiastic fantasies with some bloody 18 year old.

"There was one woman student he was very fond of and he was going on about how brilliant she was and all the rest of it. She'd done this dissertation on kids' comics and he was reading parts out to me. I felt, and probably wrongly, that everything he said was an implied criticism of being married to someone frivolous like me.

"He made this great speech about the thesis and then went out of the room. I looked at it on his desk and suddenly felt a terrific surge of liberated violence. I picked it up, ripped it into pieces and tossed them out of the window. Then he came back and I just nodded towards the garden. The thesis was falling like snowflakes. He screamed: 'God, you ugly bitch, I'll kill,' and he rushed to the wardrobe and started cutting up all my clothes with wallpaper scissors.

"I pieced all the paper together like a jigsaw and typed it out. I was a student then and it took the whole of my Easter vacation; I remember every single word of it, every table. He told the woman it had been thrown away by accident. She was very attractive. I don't blame him.

"For most of our marriage I have tried very hard not to get involved with anyone else, and, to be fair, I was never very tempted. I don't like the kind of things one hears about other people's relationships. A is having it off with B who's having it off with C who's having it off with A . . . it strikes me as a bit pathetic.

"I spend a lot of time thinking should I or shouldn't I do something. Should I go out and buy some food now? The great debate. Sometimes in my life, very rarely, I act purely spontaneously. That's how I came to sleep with one person who occasionally shows up. Some things are just too nice to pass by. When you've got it at arm's length you just think, well fuck it, what's the worst that could happen? It's not like murder or cruelty or something. Or maybe it is. Maybe Steve would think it's behaving in a cruel way.

"I never used to want children. Sometimes I think about it; I think it would be nice to see a little infant nestling at my bosom. But Steve doesn't want children. I wish we had sex more often. Whenever we do I always think why don't we do this more often. The only thing that's wrong with our sex life are crazy things to do with me. I do think I have a rather masculine outlook to sex, in some respects. No, it's not masculine, that's a terrible insult to the male sex. Sometimes my attitude is very predatory, and if I wanted to pick someone up . . . I have done that once or twice.

"When I was younger I thought there was a one hundred percent correlation between loving somebody and having sex with them. I don't think that now. I think the two things are absolutely and completely different. They're almost incompatible. I have a feeling that you should sleep with people you don't like, I don't know why I used to go out with a guy who, thinking about it now, was almost a fascist, and I hated him but I kept coming back for more. And I'm

sure I got a kick out of thinking how debased I was.

"I have thought about having a relationship with a woman, but I'm just too conventional. I could never step outside the pale. There have been two girls that I've loved. One is a girl I was at school with. I'm probably the most important person in her life, and always have been and probably always will be. She's living with a four-times divorced, senile actor.

"Wherever I masturbate — which I never did before I was married — I always think about girls and never men. I have tried thinking about men I like and it just isn't successful from the point of view of having an orgasm or even a couple. It's got to be about a woman, and it's got to be about a really horrible sort of woman that I would normally not have anything to do with. When we were on holiday last summer we were going across this forest and there was a woman coming towards us, a really fat, really horrible woman. And I thought, God, I must look at her; I must remember everything for when I get back home. It's mad, isn't it?

"If Steve ever hits me again I will leave him. He hits me a lot. I used to hit him back, but now I've stopped that. I try not to think about it. I've told him that I don't like being hit. I've told him I'll walk out. He says he's sorry but that I provoke him beyond all recall. I suppose I can be pretty nasty when I want to be.

"I wouldn't leave him unless I found someone better. That's the whole rub, isn't it. That's the summing up of my life. I would only go off if I had someone to go off with. Although I like to think of myself as someone who isn't an appendage, I must be. I have left him before. But it would set a familiar pattern. I would go at 3 am, weeping and wailing, down to my mother's or my brother's or something, and then after about two days Steve would start formally suing for peace. Then after a while my money would run out. It's different now. I could live quite comfortably on my own.

"In some ways the people I've met since Steve don't measure up to him in a way that I feel I want to live with them. The thing is ripped apart with inconsistencies. Steve is someone who in some respects really does try to live outside the norms of this society. His only transgressions are in connection with myself. He's very able. He could have made a good career for himself, if you like, but he's chosen not to do that. He's fundamentally out of sympathy with this society. He doesn't have any grabbing, greedy type feelings at all. And I respect him for that.

"I've tried to tell him how resentful I feel about the fact that I do have to spend such a lot of time doing rather trivial and unimportant things and that I think it's hindering my development. He often agrees with me — 'You're perfectly right, we must take this into account' — but he doesn't really mean it; he doesn't do anything about it. I've been thinking, though, that once he finishes his research then it might be my turn again, to go back and complete a degree.

"I am seriously thinking of becoming involved in politics again, because I'm a socialist and because if you've been involved — I was in a Trotskyist organisation when I was 17 — when you drop out you say to yourself that you will stay pure in heart, sort of thing. But I've noticed in myself over the past few years how incredibly reactionary I am becoming, and how easy it is if you have a comfortable life style, which we have, to fall into a very right-wing attitude.

"All the crude bourgeois platitudes — that people should pull themselves together. That sort of rubbish. And that maybe you wouldn't want all the goodies that you've got taken away from you. I'm ashamed of myself for thinking like that. One reason I want to be involved is to gain a sense of purpose. I just don't like this society very much. I don't like what it does to people. I don't like what it's done to me. As far as I'm concerned, the sooner it goes the better."□

We hope that Ruth Brown's description of her marriage will be the first in a series of articles on aspects of relationships.

For the series "Interview" we asked readers to interview themselves about their lives, feelings and aspirations, and how they had changed under the influence of Women's Liberation.

Now we'd like to follow up the idea by asking you to write about problems, solutions, successes or failures of trying to understand and change any personal relationship.

Keep your article to not more than 1,500 words, double-spaced typing, and send it with an sae to Interview 2, Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS.

WOMEN & WORK

A DOCUMENT ON THE DIVISION OF LABOUR IN INDUSTRY... A DOCUMENT ON THE DIVISION OF

Rosalind Delmar

A visit to an art gallery can produce a variety of different experiences. You can discover a particular picture, which remains in your imagination; you can work through a whole series of related paintings or sculptures, the product of one artist or school. Often, for me, in representational art the most striking aspect of the artist's practice is the use of colour — all else can fade, but that remains. And, of course, the use of colour relates to the object of the artist's preoccupation.

If you start off from this point of view, a visit to *Women and Work* can be somewhat disconcerting, for the first impression is that it is colour-less. That turns out to be not altogether the case, however. In a darkened section of the gallery, an enclosed space, you find two colour films simultaneously projected, showing side by side the jobs done by women and by men in the Metal Box factory which is the location for the study on show. Accompanying the films are the sounds of the factory, the whirring, booming and clanging of the machines which are being tended. It is this segment of the exhibition which suggests, through the use of film camera and amplified sound, the flesh and blood of the process which the rest of the work attempts to analyse.

Women and Work is a show devised by three women artists, Kay Hunt, Mary Kelly and Margaret Harrison. It was on exhibition during May at the South London Art Gallery, and will be shown elsewhere throughout the country. The work on display is the result of two years collaboration between women who share a common commitment to the women's liberation movement. Their project was to combine research on the sexual division of labour in industry with the techniques of informational art.

The film material is, of course, one of the results of their study. For the rest, there are blown-up reproductions of charts and tables showing the different jobs performed by men and women and their different wages, a section showing the results of the job



evaluation exercise carried out in the factory as a way of dealing with the Equal Pay Act, photographs of the hourly-paid women workers, a map indicating the location of the factory and where the workers live.

The theme of the sexual division of labour in production is played out in various ways. What comes across very clearly is the different demands made on the workers' physique. The male jobs tend to be mobile (often involving the movement of the whole body); the women's jobs tend to be static, fiddly and repetitious. This point is underlined in the section of photographs illustrating job description — they all require the camera to concentrate its attention on the women's hands.

The final section of the exhibition comprises books, documents and tape-recordings, including one of older women reminiscing about changes in the allocation of jobs into male and female. To meet the needs of this material one corner of the room is converted into a small reference section. Indeed, for the purposes of the show, the gallery is transformed into a mixture of sites — library, viewing theatre, display centre. And the mounting of the exhibition shows great

resourcefulness in the use of available space. But what raises most questions is the artistic position adopted.

It is obvious that aesthetic considerations are central from the careful positioning of the material. There is a formality and insistence in the almost geometrical placing of black, white and grey visuals against bare white walls. Its aura is one of a deliberate under-statement, an invitation to discovery rather than an overt declaration of findings. This low-key presentation led one group of leftist artists to dub the show a manifestation of a new offshoot of bourgeois ideology — 'aridism'. To the management of the factory, on the other hand, *Women and Work* didn't appear at all arid. Their reaction was to ban the women artists from visiting the factory again. It doesn't seem too fanciful to assume that they had in part recognised that the women had demonstrated the extent to which the job and wage differentials between male and female takes its place as a particular aspect of a general system of class exploitation.

All the same, it is the case that the artists have taken up a somewhat polemical position against other conceptions of avantgarde art. In *Women and Work* material from one situation — the point of production — is transferred firmly into the gallery, in a gesture which runs directly counter to those who argue that the purpose of revolutionary artists is to liberate art from the galleries — a sort of 'out of the galleries, on to the streets' position.

Moreover, it is the fact that the photographs, interviews, tables and charts are contained in a particular mode within the gallery which makes them into 'art'. The exhibits could be described variously as the tools in trade of the historian, the sociologist, the trades union militant or the women's liberation activist. It is in meeting the needs of the gallery and highlighting the aspect of visual perception that they are transposed into instruments of artistic production.

In that process too, the artists reveal the



sort of demands which they make on themselves and on their audience. Some artists want the visitor to take an active part in freely arranging what they have produced. By contrast, Mary Kelly, Margaret Harrison and Kay Hunt demand intellectual involvement and submission to the guidance and direction of the exhibitors.

If the format and the thinking behind the show have any ideal objective it is that a learning process about the position of women in industry should be set up. This in itself puts extra demands on the artists – in

particular the demand that the show be not just informative, but also explanatory. Although *Women and Work* does stand out for its clarity and lucidity of exposition, there is still the sense that its informational style is insufficiently backed by explanatory guidance – the material, unfortunately doesn't 'speak for itself'. What could; and doesn't do the job of offering either additional explanation or some interpretation of the findings, is the catalogue.

That said, there is no doubt in my mind that *Women and Work* is a stimulating and

thought-provoking experiment. As a form of alternative propaganda it raises questions about the nature of agitational art. As research it comes out of the need for a greater understanding of the issues involved in the struggle to liberate women from a narrow confinement to tedious labour.□

The exhibition was initially shown at the South London Art Gallery, the site of the research. It will be available during the coming year to trades councils and educational institutions, and then will become part of the permanent collection of the National Museum of Labour History.

GROUP A: AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS UNDER £2000

GROUP B: AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS UNDER £3000 BUT NOT LESS THAN £2000 GROUP C: AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS OVER £3000

MONTHLY PAID EMPLOYEES:		MONTHLY PAID EMPLOYEES:		MONTHLY PAID EMPLOYEES:	
Clerks, Cashiers, Secretaries, Typists, Office Machine operators, and Quality Measurement Inspectors	11 MEN 38 WOMEN	Administrators Personnel, Welfare and other professional staff Security officers, Supervisors, Charge-hands and Management Trainees	37 MEN 11 WOMEN	Managers, Directors, Heads of Departments, and other Managerial staff such as Branch Engineers and Accountants	22 MEN NO WOMEN
HOURLY PAID EMPLOYEES:		HOURLY PAID EMPLOYEES:		HOURLY PAID EMPLOYEES:	
Operatives, Assemblers, Packers, Inspectors and other employees including Cleaners and Canteen Assistants	131 MEN 168 WOMEN	Engineers, Electricians Machine setters, Drivers, Despatch planners, and Printers	71 MEN NO WOMEN	None	

FEMALE	AGE 59	MALE	AGE 20
FULL TIME		FULL TIME	
DOUBLE SEAMER OPERATOR		MACHINE SETTER	
GRADE 3		GRADE 5	
AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS	40	AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS	52
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES	25.60	AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES	41.08

6:00 AM: GET UP, MAKE BREAKFAST
6:45 AM: LEAVE HOME
7:30 AM: START WORK, GET LINES READY
8:00 AM: MACHINES START, KEEP MACHINES RUNNING
12:30 PM: LUNCH, RING WIFE
1:30 PM: START, INSPECTION, GENERAL SUPERVISING, LABOUR, PRODUCTION
9:30 PM: FINISH WORK
10:00 PM: GET HOME, LIGHT MEAL
12:00 PM: GO TO BED

CLIFTON McKINSON, AGE 32
1 SON AGE 10 4 DAUGHTERS
AGES 7, 6, 4, 2

SECTION FOREMAN

7:00 AM: GET UP, GET FAMILY READY FOR SCHOOL & WORK
9:00 AM: WASHING, CLEANING
10.30 AM: GO SHOPPING
11:45 AM: PREPARE MEAL
12:30 PM: SERVE MEAL
2:00 PM: CLEAN WINDOWS
4:00 PM: PREPARE MEAL FOR EVENING
4:30 PM: MAKE TEA FOR SON
4:45 PM: LEAVE FOR WORK
5:30 PM: START WORK
9:30 PM: FINISH WORK
9:45 PM: GET HOME, WASH UP
HAVE TEA
10:45 PM: GO TO BED

EILEEN SZMIDT, AGE 46
4 SONS 1 DAUGHTER
AGES 25, 24, 21, 19, 14

DOUBLE SEAM OPERATOR
PART TIME 5:30 PM - 9:30 PM



HOMELESS AND OUTLAWED

It was recently decided that vagrancy should remain a punishable offence. Welfare organisations and other groups raised an outcry at the Home Office's decision, but no-one pointed out why the law is particularly hard on women. Elizabeth Bayliss writes about the homeless women who come to the hostel where she works, who they are and why they are having a tougher time than their male counterparts.

Women are the homemakers, the stabilisers in our society. So what is a homeless woman? Certainly not a stabiliser with her plastic bag belongings and three hats on her head.

Women without homes are seen to be a contradiction in terms, deviant. Deviant in the sense that they do not fit into the normal, accepted social structure, which places a woman inside a nuclear family of husband, wife and children, and leaves her there.

Implicit within the treatment of people without homes by the government, the various social service departments, many charitable organisation, is this value judgement of deviance.

To concentrate on a woman's deviance, and to imply that she is sick, places the issue of homeless women in the hands of the doctors and psychiatrists, thus obviating the political responsibility inherent in the ever increasing fact of homelessness. The desperate shortage of homes in London can be side-stepped as a political fact, allowing the office blocks to continue to sprout, uncontested. In a doctors' journal there was an advertisement: a tall office block was pictured, beside which a woman was slumped, miserable, anxious. The caption read "You, the general practitioner, can do nothing about the housing problem, but you can do something about her depression."¹

Railway carriage, empty taxis and lonely men

In 1961 there was a total of 5871 cheap lodging house beds available in London. 557 were for women.

In 1971 there were 4385 beds, and 323 for women. And the number of beds is rapidly decreasing, with no corresponding decrease in the number of homeless people. Two large hostels for women are closing down this year plus many specialist projects because their grants are not being renewed. More single homeless women. Nobody knows how many homeless people there are in London. And there seems no adequate way to find out. Head counts seem to be the usual way to calculate those sleeping out but this can only provide very rough measures. For homeless women this is an even more inadequate method of assessment than for men, because women are 'invisible'. Women who are homeless can frequently find a bed, if they are prepared to shack up with a man for the night. Women with lice crawling on their foreheads, stinking of piss, and one or two men in tow, are not an uncommon sight in Soho.



There are always railway carriages, empty taxis, and lonely men to provide shelter for the night.

However, if a single woman wants to sleep on her own, in a bed rather than under the 'Cross' (Charing Cross) or one of the bridges, and she has no money she will probably find herself in the local authority social service department offices, or the Social Security offices; the sphere of the social workers. But neither the local authority social workers nor the SS workers are officially responsible for housing single homeless people. If they are prepared to try and help, unofficially, there is little to offer; facilities provided for the single homeless are elusive and meagre.

Elusive because most hostels are reluctant or unprepared to take in women with no money to pay the rent and in order to get money for a bed from the Social Security a woman has to have an address. The hostel's reluctance is understandable when you realise that it can take 6-10 weeks to sort out a woman's claim with the SS, during which time the hostel is losing its rent; a matter of survival. Meagre because in 1972 there were 6 hostels in the whole of London that would take penniless women; that is, provide emergency accommodation. And now those few places are tightening up; they can no longer risk losing over two months rent.

Of the facilities available for women, two are government run reception centres that sleep 81. It seems that as many as half of these beds are permanently empty, for a variety of reasons; disruptive behaviour, or breaking any of the extensive set of rules can get a woman barred. These centres are unpopular. They are very reminiscent of prisons — on entering you are stripped, deloused, you and your clothes, your bottle and pills removed. Unfriendly, institutional, lacking in any home comfort, they feel impermanent and punishing. There are 24 reception centres in Britain, two of which are for women.

Besides the reception centres, there are hostels run by various voluntary — private — agencies. The Salvation Army provides 6000 beds for men and 250 for women; the Church Army provides 1400 beds for men and 250 for women; Christian Action provides 60 beds, all for women.



LAURENCE SPARHAM Homeless and alcoholic woman in London.

Desperate to get back inside

The number of homeless women is increasing and will continue to do so. Recently, the number of beds available in mental hospitals has been cut down by half. In Britain 50% more women than men have been mental hospital patients some time in their lives. Many homeless women have spent long stretches of their lives in various hospitals and consequently only feel at home there. They are now discharged often with nowhere to go and no ways of coping with the world. Women are sent out with a couple of quid, a terror of traffic, a fear of their own violence, after years of institutionalisation, to find themselves a home and money to pay for it.

No wonder these women are desperate to get back inside; desperate enough to cut their wrists, smash a window, take an overdose; anything to show that they are sufficiently dangerous to themselves and others to qualify for the sedated security of the hospital.

I spent four or five hours at a time, sitting helpless with a woman who can see her only way of going on as being inside the confines of a hospital. She weakly cut at her wrists with a piece of broken cup, to get back inside, I could do nothing except try and help her to hold on. The hospital didn't want her because she was "too destructive". They said they could do nothing for her.

Another woman would lie down in the middle of the road, to be moved by the police onto the pavement, then she would move back into the road again. She could think of no other way to get back into the hospital where she had spent all her adult life.

Besides the mental hospitals, there is Holloway, which now houses nearly twice its maximum number. It is still a criminal offence to drink in a public place; many of the 'familiar' to Holloway are in and out on drunken related charges. After much agitation and pressure, the government in 1972 put on its statute books provision for detoxification centres where alcoholics could go and dry out for an unspecified length of time, thus bypassing the courts and prisons. We are still waiting for the first one to be set up. And the police are still picking up women for being drunk in a public place. They are put in prison for a couple of weeks, only to come out and be picked up again immediately. So, Holloway is impossibly crowded. The number of people convicted of crimes involving drunkenness has increased; between 1972 and 1973 there was a 34% increase amongst the 18-20 year olds. Women convicted of drunkenness account for between 13 and 18% of the annual female receptions to prisons. This is double the male proportion. This woman is frequently homeless; she is "barred from the common lodging houses and lives a lifestyle very similar to that of the Skid Row alcoholic but without the comradeship achieved by many of the men in the drinking schools."² Drinking schools are composed of groups dossing, vagrant men who regularly drink together; any money acquired is used to buy drink, or its alcohol equivalent. There are often one or two women who float around the male drinking schools, being used and abused by the man. Although the women in this situation have to be tough, their very isolation makes them vulnerable. They seem to accept the frequent beatings up they get from the men as being the right of the men when drunk. I have heard of a woman being burnt alive in the park, when unconscious from drinking. Another was trampled flat.

It seems that women vagrant alcoholics have more ways of getting money than the men in the form of begging and casual prostitution. So they must be valuable to the drinking schools.

Women who had expected and planned for marriage

Homeless people are afflicted by social workers, 'helpers' of various kinds, who want to cure, rehabilitate, convert, pacify, motivate to want what the social worker wants them to want. But women who are homeless, adrift without a man, a father, husband or son, often have no motivation to survive alone. "Why be cured?" I hear women ask. "My children are grown, and don't want to be bothered by me. My husband is dead. What is there left for me?"



They are defined only as problem people, grab a hold of this definition of themselves (any identity is better than none) and talk comfortedly about themselves as 'alkis', 'addicts', 'schizos'. The assumption on the part of the hospitals, the prison, the wardens, the 'authorities' of helplessness and categorisability is turned by the categorised into a comfortable, if negative and narrow justification for their continued helplessness.

So that I hear women talk about 'my social worker' — possessive article — 'The person who oversees my life for me.'

Working with homeless women, I find that most of my energy goes into trying, often hopelessly, not to play the overseer:

"My giro hasn't come, will you phone the Social Security for me?"

"Can't you do it yourself?"

"But you're the social worker."

"It's your claim. You can hassle them with much more conviction than I can. They've kept you waiting, not me."

"I don't know what to say, and anyway they won't listen to me."

"You got what you wanted last time."

And refusing to legitimise a woman's anger:

"Will you come and tell that woman to stop scratching?"

"She's not bothering me."

"But she's driving me mad."

"What right have I to tell someone to stop scratching?"

There is no one 'type' of woman who becomes homeless. They are young, old, addicted to alcohol, barbiturates, heroin, speed, vinegar, shoe polish; they are ex-offenders, ex-mental hospital patients, pregnant girls. But there are countless women who are none of these things. Woman who cannot be explained away so easily; women who are simply homeless. It is easy to assume that all homeless women are pitiable creatures who are misfits in one way or another — crazy, criminals, addicts. But from my experience, many homeless women are simply isolated people; not linked into a family network, either because their family is dead or because they cannot fulfil any useful function inside it. Wives, mothers who were in a stable situation until their children grew up; looked after their parents until they died; women who had expected and planned for marriage and family until the war killed their men, and dislocated their hopes for security. I have met several women, now middle-aged, dingily-dressed and out of contact with everyone, who

only talk with energy and coherence about the war, when they were land girls. They were involved with service men, men who were killed. The photographs they have show immaculate and fashionable women in pill box hats and fur wraps, draped on the arm of a smart uniformed man. These women have spent their lives since then inside hospitals.

Some of these women are educated, middle class, with all the chances accustomed to wealth and the freedom it is supposed to bring. Nevertheless, they are homeless today. Perhaps because they were deprived as women; deprived of any choice of viable role models, which they could use as reference points in developing an identity and behaviour pattern that could be accepted as alternatives to the only roles available; mother — producer of babies and woman — consumer of goods.

The values by which a man and a woman are judged as normal and successful in our society are very different. The emphasis for men is on achievement or at least striving; for a woman the emphasis is on her ability to form stable relationships. A woman who has difficulty forming relationships with men is, in a fundamental way, in a very different position from her male counterpart. He need not see himself as a failure whilst he works whereas a woman without a family has been able to see herself as little else besides that. Too often the people a homeless woman meets in a hostel or rehabilitation centre re-affirms her view of herself as a failed misfit. It often seems that rehabilitation means teaching a woman to accept more easily and passively the limited roles we are assigned as women.

To change the appalling homelessness problem in London today, we need different kinds of accommodation made available to rent cheaply. Accommodation that considers single people; that does not discriminate against women who are single; small housing units that simply provide a room; accommodation that is as long term as necessary. Accommodation that includes support for those who need it; support which does not impose itself, allowing people to define their own lives.

Such easy statements to make.□

1. From Bob Searchfield's slide collection.
2. Shirley Otto and Gloria Litman — *Treatment of Women in Psychiatry* — 1974.

too late
 it's too late, mother, for
 you to know i
 think of you and
 often see your face, your
 form, your wrinkles (which
 were few) and other round
 small women in the roads
 and streets. i
 have needed all this
 time to know you were
 right in denouncing
 family (as an institution,
 not certain individuals – for
 you hurt a lot of feelings), in
 chafing at the role
 of mother (i recognise
 the resentments), in
 writing in green and purple
 inks (i do the same sometimes), in
 pasting silver stars on
 your letters to me when i
 was little and when i
 was grown (to cheer me up or
 yourself?). i used to think
 you childish
 eccentric
 frivolous
 but now i know you
 were on the right track
 though i can't say what
 that was, only that i
 love you for it all. now:
 too late. you died alone in
 your sleep in your
 salvationarmyroom that i
 never saw because you
 were ashamed, i guess. now
 my tears wet this paper and
 my biscuits burn in
 the oven

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WOMEN & WORK

A DOCUMENT ON THE DIVISION
OF LABOUR IN INDUSTRY

By Kay Hunt: Mary Kelly:
Margaret Harrison

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KSBOOKSB

Recent Tomi Ungerer Books

The Beast of Monsieur Racine
(The Bodley Head £1.50/
Puffin 50p)

Allumette
(Methuen £2.25)

Tomi Ungerer, as well as being one of the most prolific and inventive of children's writers, is also one of the most anarchic. If you want to see somebody being beaten up, got the better of, eaten alive, doing their own thing, breaking all the rules, or finding a new way of looking at a situation, you can't do better than dip into one of his books. For instance, in *The Beast of Monsieur Racine*, there's a marvellous yarn about how the whole academic world is fooled by the spoof of two young children. Right from the start when Mon. Racine, a retired tax collector, has his prize-winning golden pears stolen by a naughty beast looking like a sexless heap of blankets, we know this is no ordinary tale. Mon. Racine befriends the intriguing beast, indulging it in its

every expensive whim, hoping always to discover the unique secret of its identity. But in spite of page after page of gorgeous fun and adventure, he remains baffled and the beast is shipped off to the Academy of Sciences in Paris. Tomi Ungerer leads us expectantly on, with his tongue-in-cheek prose and tightly crammed illustrations, until the mystery is solved. You must get it for your kids. It's worth getting hold of the hardback edition, if you can, as the pictures are proportionately bigger and better.

Sometimes, though, his inventiveness amounts to very little, especially when Ungerer is writing about a heroine. In *Allumette*, he's taken a straightforward magical idea, of everything one could ever wish for raining from heaven — and has updated it into a crude piece of social realism. In some ways this book might seem to answer all the demands that children's book groups have been making on publishers, the main character is a little girl, and there are many people who are usually totally absent.

Illustrations by Tomi Ungerer





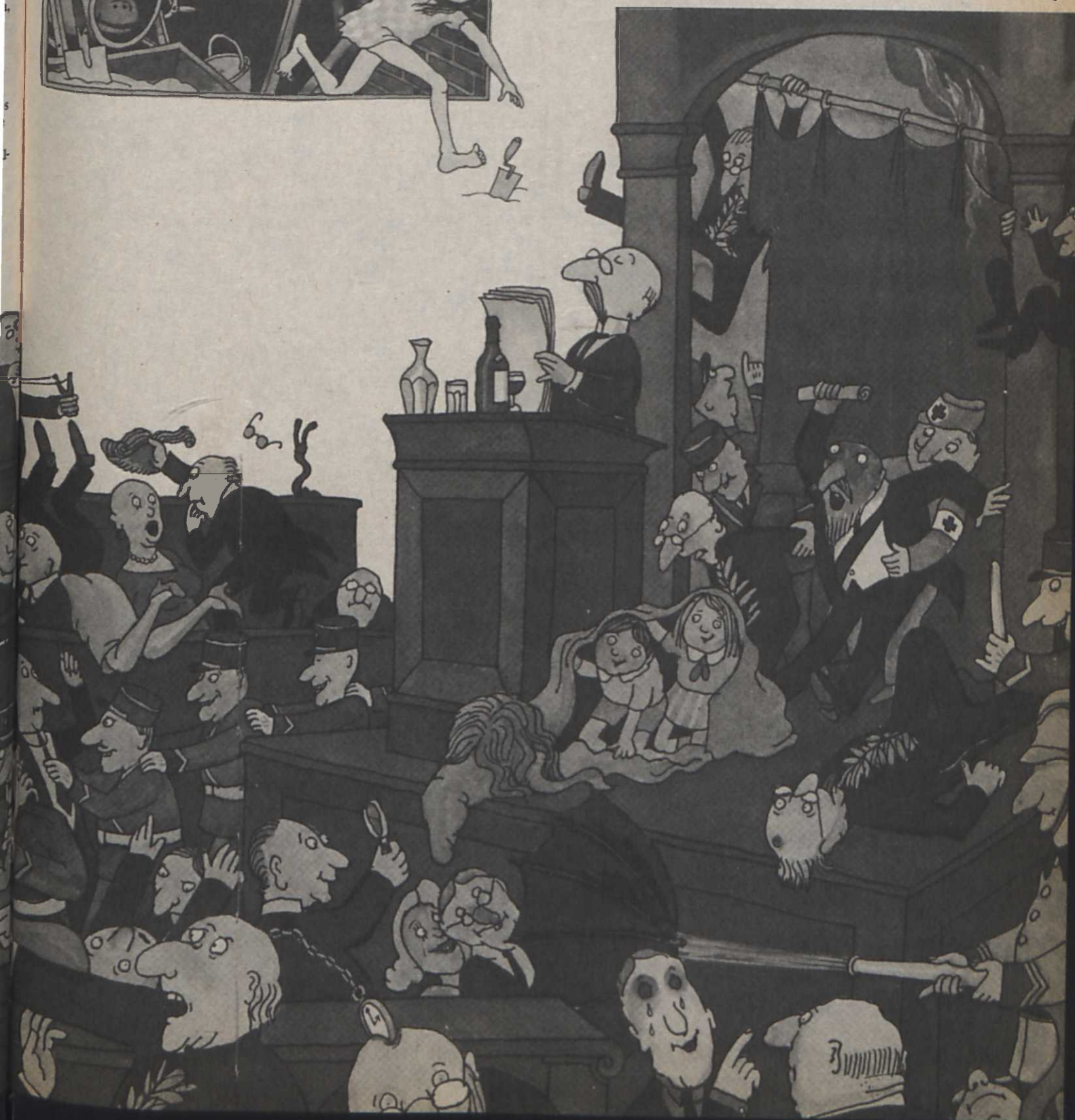
Allumette, with her pathetic red-nosed face and puppet-like charm, collapses on the pavement because of the callousness of the cruel world. She prays with all her might to the Christmas gods, and is rained upon by a monumental pile of food, toys and consumables, even babies bottles. She announces that "she'll give it all away, before it spoils" and an orderly queue of the oppressed – the maimed, the lame, the hungry and cold, the jobless, the joyless and the sick and the blind and the weak of mind – appears to await their handout.

What a nice convenient way for

us to explain to our children how rich people help poor people, so that nothing needs changing. When all the 'problems' have been solved at home her band of volunteers even sorts out the rest of the world.

If you believe that real change only comes about by people taking some direct control over their own destiny then Ungerer's story fails in communicating worthwhile ideas to children. But even in spite of all this, *Allumette* could have been a magical book, but, with its curiously plastic figures, it is not. □

Jo Spence
Children's Rights Workshop

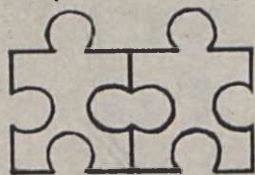




Bette Davis working up an emotional storm in *Beyond the Forest*

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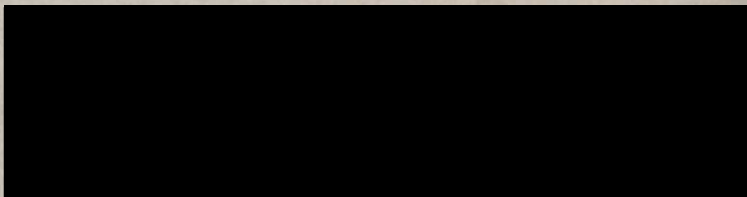
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FILM

The Nightcleaners Part 1 Produced by the Berwick Street Collective, distributed by The Other Cinema

It's difficult to think of many films which have elicited the kinds of response *The Nightcleaners* has, both within the Women's Movement and on the Left in general. There have been two dominant types of response to the film, both resulting from a clash between the nature of the film, the sort of expectations people usually take with them to the cinema, and ideas about what 'political cinema' should concern itself with. The first dominant reaction is that the film is 'unwatchable' – in its search for new forms of political cinema, the film loses its coherence. The second aspect of the film which has infuriated many people is that it does not appear to give a blow by blow account of the nightcleaners' campaign itself, and is therefore not a 'useful' film to tell people about these kinds of struggles. However, these reactions mirror people's unthought-out assumptions about what political film-making is, rather than what the actual film does and the intentions of the film-makers.

What these reactions demonstrate most clearly is the widely held assumptions about the necessity for political cinema to produce the effect of realism, to show things as they really are. This question of realism in the cinema should not be confused with that of naturalism in other art forms. The central difference between the cinema and other art forms is that the cinema mechanically reproduces reality through the camera. This has led to the widely held belief that reality can be recaptured on film as in no other art form, and in this way, the idea of 'realism' has, throughout the entire history of the cinema, been used as an artistic justification for its existence. Often the term 'realism' is used as a label by film critics as a substitute for 'highly valued' and little more. The argument usually runs – this film is good because it lives up to *my image* of the essence of the medium – that is, the true nature of film is that it impassively reveals the world as it really is. This attitude has been, to a large measure, taken over unquestioned by political film-makers. It is an aesthetic position which is particularly strong in the field of television documentary, where the viewer, through camera style, use of commentary and editing (eg the *Man Alive* series) is made to feel that what is being presented to him/her is objective and impartial. The camera is supposed to be a

neutral observer on the scene, and what we see is presented as the 'truth' of the situation. Often people see the manipulative aspect of television solely in terms of its political content. In fact, it is in the aesthetics of television forms that television's greatest ideological weapon really lies, a weapon which is used to encourage the passivity of the viewer, to suppress thought and to stress what is, rather than what might be: Political films usually aim at changing the content of the film, using the same mode of film-making as television documentaries. They present the 'correct' position (eg The Newsreel Group's new film on abortion) without opening up the contradictions within the situation or encouraging the viewer to think for him/herself. In this aspect they are just as oppressive as the established media.

Too often audiences and people writing about political films elevate their own dominant assumptions and their subjective responses into a way of judging a film without realising that these aesthetic problems should be examined more fully. *The Nightcleaners* is a film which radically challenges such assumptions and the ideology which spawned them, and as such, I think it is the most important political film ever to have been made in this country.

The film was begun in December 1972, and Part 1 (Part 2 is not yet completed) took over four years to complete. It was conceived of originally very much in conventional terms, using extensive interviews, a neutral camera and all the other gimmicks characterising TV documentaries, but this time from the nightcleaners' point of view (intended for use in the campaign). However, the film grew into something quite different at the editing stage. Faced with their basically TV-style material, and comparing this with their experience during the shooting of the film, another conception of the film began to emerge, out of discussions and experiments around the editing table. The result is a film which, rather than tracing a series of political events in time, attempts to involve the viewer in a process of consciousness-raising. In this process we (as the film-makers say) "will come to realise both the poverty of our own consciousness and the real possibilities for enriching it". Someone I spoke to who saw the film remarked on how the images stayed with her for days (unlike traditional forms of documentary) in a quite disconcerting way. The film questions the traditional passivity of the spectator in the cinema. It attempts to create a situation whereby the viewer is not only able to participate, but is in fact required to do so – to make his/her contribution, as the film-makers have done, to the process of meaning-production which is the film. (By this I mean that a film of this kind makes a break with the idea of art as self-expression, which is essentially a bourgeois idea.

Instead it poses the idea of film as a product, where the act of filming and the act of viewing comprise two moments of equal value, neither having priority over the other. In this way the traditional division between work and leisure in capitalist society, with the viewer as passive consumer of the film, is broken down. The film is a material object in which meanings are produced, not by the film-maker alone, but by the film-maker and the viewer together.)

The film-makers also reject the widely held assumption that it is possible to give a report of such a struggle, no matter how committed one may be as a film-maker, without intervening in that event in some way. As a result, the film contains within itself a reflection of its own involvement in the history of the events being filmed, an involvement which necessarily re-stated and re-defined the events themselves. This aspect marks the film off from almost all political films which take their form from television. It does not attempt to document events as they happen. All we see are fragments from these events, often cut off quite arbitrarily, or frozen for us on the screen, sometimes repeated again and again. But, gradually, the systems which order and unite the various political, ideological and cultural events and processes become apparent as the film progresses, if, we, the viewers, are prepared to try and become aware of them. All the contradictory elements in the struggle (eg working class consciousness together with traditional ideas about the family; internal stresses between the cleaners and union representatives; class differences between the leafletters and the nightcleaners) are brought to the fore and examined in the film. Simultaneously, the film incorporates various aesthetic devices (eg slow motion) to describe the nature of the work in great detail, and not least the devastating isolation, soul-destroying boredom and exhaustion.

One of the questions posed by the film, and perhaps its most important question for all of us is, what is a photographic image? Is it transparent and self-evident in its meaning, or is the question a more complex one? Can one just go somewhere and rely on the camera to record mechanically the real social processes at work? How is meaning produced in an image or a series of images editing together?

The Nightcleaners isolates images, reframes them, replaces the synchronised sound-track with different sounds. It uses black leader, inserted in between shots, so that the screen goes black and we have time to think about the image we have just seen. The film scrutinises the kinds of images we are bombarded with daily in the media so that we see them afresh, the process by which they produce meaning is brought to the fore. We are made conscious of the way in which images, while appearing natural and obvious to the spectator,

through their connotations, produce other meanings relating to the dominant ideology of the society in which we live. Conventional documentary techniques of editing have been developed which gloss over and disguise these aspects of the image – their aim is to confirm the naturalness and unproblematic nature of the image – the taken for granted world of the dominant ideology by which we live. Despite certain shortcomings in this respect (eg sometimes the demands put on the spectator are too great) *The Nightcleaners* could provide the basis – if critics and other political film-makers are prepared to abandon their reactionary TV ideologies – for a new direction in British political film-making. Approaching the film is rather like approaching a book. With a book the reader always has the opportunity to go back and re-read some point which he/she has not been able to understand at the first reading. With most films, this is not the case – the viewer is trapped. One of the most innovative aspects of *The Nightcleaners* is that it attempts to trace this process of rereading. We are no longer consumers of the film, we become part of a learning process.

Finally, something must be said about the central theme of the film which is the distance between the lived experience of the middle-class Movement women involved in the struggle and the cleaners themselves. This point is made visually near the beginning of the film when we hear Movement women on the sound track discussing the notion of female sexuality while we see an image of a cleaner working alone in a high office block shot at a distance and from below. The incongruity of sound and image make their point, a point which is returned to again and again in the film to be amplified, re-examined and explored further. The problem of class differences and the divisions within the socialist movement are rarely dealt with in political films. Too often these contradictions are repressed by film-makers in favour of a cosy romanticism. *The Nightcleaners* presents an honest vision of what such political work really entails. As Sally Alexander in her excellent article in *Red Rag* No. 6 about the campaign points out "the women's movement like the rest of the left, still has to learn how to popularise its ideas and politics successfully". As the film-makers themselves say, if one were making a film about any other struggle it would not be possible to talk about such things... "Women's Liberation has taught all of us". As the Women's Movement is redefining the class struggle, so is *The Nightcleaners* redefining the struggle for revolutionary cinema.

(NB Part 2 is due to be completed later this year, which deals with the strike in Fulham of the Civil Service Union women. It is planned to bring a pamphlet out with the film.)

Claire Johnston



SEPTEMBER 4 — DECEMBER 6 '75



WOMEN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL

PLAY DIARY : STUDIO THEATRE

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OWNERS

by Caryl Churchill

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LINDA POLAN IN TWO PARTS

Her new one woman show

Oct. 28 — Nov. 8

To Be Announced

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Nov. 4 — 8

Tues. — Thurs. 7.30pm

Fri. 8.00, Sat. 4.45 & 8.00pm

THE ANTIQUE BABY

by Jennifer Phillips

Nov. 11 — 22 at 7.45pm (Sat 8.15pm)

SPEAK NOW

by Olwen Wymark

Nov. 25 — Dec. 6 at 8.15pm

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"...A lot of people say your health is more important than money but you can't live without it, and I can't live on what I get off my husband."

I mean you go up the road with £1, you can't get a dinner having £1, you need 2 or 3 of them. So my kids are more important than myself I think..."



"...to ignore the ways in which we perceive ourselves, and each other, through sexual relations is to miss out a whole area of experience."

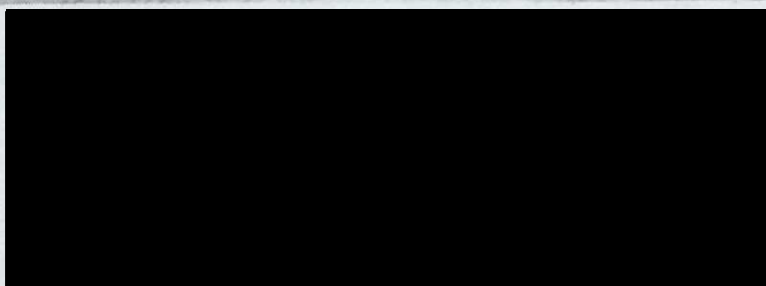
which continuously holds the left back and continuously limits the possibility for attacking capitalism..."



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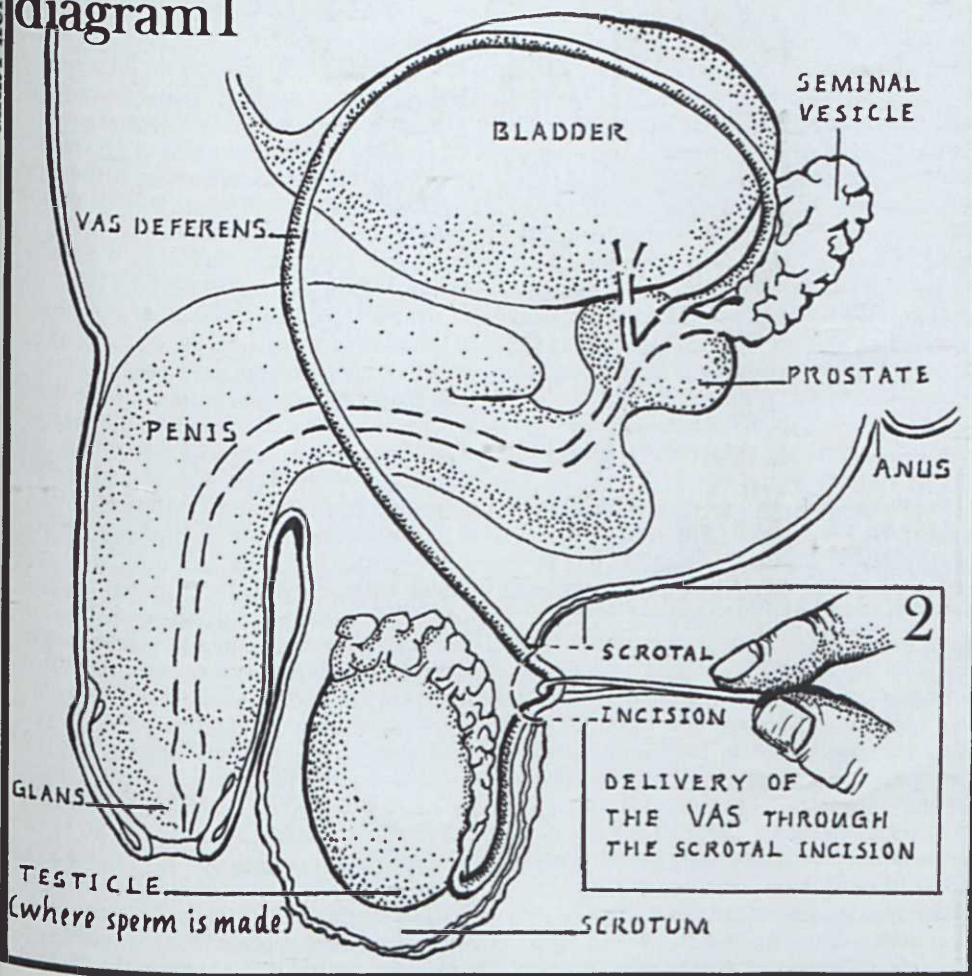
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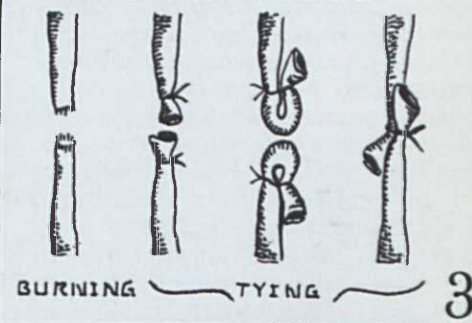
VASECTOMY

MEDICAL

diagram 1



VARIOUS METHODS OF LIGATURING THE CUT ENDS OF THE VAS



How do men feel about it?

We talked to a number of different men who had gone through the operation. Most of them were 30 or older, married and had either two or three children. Nearly all were surprised that we wanted to talk to them about their vasectomy — it seemed to be making a lot out of a very ordinary event.

The reasons they gave for having a vasectomy varied, but there were two main ones: pressures of day-to-day life (particularly financial and family problems), and suspicion of, or failure of, the contraception available to women. In the case of one man, his wife had twins and then a third child which neither wanted and about whom the wife was resentful. Both felt that the marriage would suffer unless the husband was sterilised. In another case, a woman had tried every form of contraception, until — with her health at risk — her husband had a vasectomy.

Two older men, in their forties, made the decision away from such pressures. They simply felt that they and their wives had enough children, and also believed it was bad for the woman to be on the pill too long.

Terry and Janice had been married for 23 years. They had four children and Terry had another four children by a previous marriage. They worked out that Janice had been on the pill for 12 years. If Terry had a vasectomy then he would be responsible for contraception for the next 12 years until Janice's menopause. In other words they would have shared equally the responsibility for contraception.

Eddie, a South London cab-driver, explained his decision in some detail. They had two kids, Eddie had steady work, and home life was going along well, when he began to feel possessive and jealous about Linda, his wife. To deal with these feelings he deliberately got her pregnant. When Linda was four months pregnant Eddie realised what he'd done, felt bad and talked to her about it.

They thought and talked about Eddie having the operation for a year before deciding. They both felt dubious about the pill, and saw that it was easier for him than for her to be sterilised. Eddie said he had finally decided not just out of convenience, but also because he wanted to share in the

How is it done?

Diagram 1

The object of the operation is to prevent sperms entering the woman during sexual intercourse. The sperms are produced in the testicles. The vas is separated out by squeezing it to the back of the scrotal sac. Then, under a local anaesthetic, a cut is made in the scrotum and the vas is pulled out a little way. It is then cut and the ends of the cut vas are tied or burnt.

Diagram 2 and 3

After the operation the man continues to have a normal erection and ejaculation, but the semen (the fluid he discharges from the penis) is free from fertilising sperms which are absorbed into the tissue. "It is like a river that has been cleared of fish — everything remains the same except for the lack of fish."

The operation is not always successful because sometimes the cut vas rejoins. But this is only in a small percentage of cases. Take the figures for the Marie Stopes Clinic where widely available vasectomy was pioneered in Britain. In 1970 they carried out 962 operations. A second operation was needed in 25 cases. In 1971 the figures were: 1249 vasectomies, 25 second operations. In 1972: 1229 vasectomies, 20 second operations. In 1973: 1040 vasectomies, 11 second operations. In 1974: 619 vasectomies, 4 second operations.

The Islington Mens' Group describe male sterilisation and talk to men who have had the operation, asking them why they decided on a vasectomy and how they felt about it afterwards. Did they feel resentful, or did it make for a more equal relationship with their partners?

In 1975 there is still no wholly reliable, harmless, cheap contraceptive without side effects. Consequently millions of people have turned to sterilisation as the only safe and effective method of contraception. The operation for women consists of cutting the Fallopian tubes — the tubes which carry the eggs from the ovaries down into the womb where they can be fertilised by the male sperms. The operation for men consists of cutting the little tube, known as the vas deferens, which carries the sperms from the testicles along the penis. Known as vasectomy, it is a much simpler operation than sterilisation for women. Three out of four sterilisations carried out are vasectomies.

Of the 700 million fertile women in the world, only 20 million are protected by sterilisation of the man or woman compared with 22 million protected by the pill. By May 1972, 50,000 vasectomies had been done in Britain, largely among married couples in their mid 30's or early 40's who already had two or more children, and who wanted to stop the size of their family there.

responsibilities traditionally left to women. Several of Eddie's friends have had the operation, before and after his, and this obviously helps — knowing people who've had the operation if you have any doubts.

How do you go about it?

In each case, getting the operation meant going through the same procedure, first visiting the local GP for referral to a surgeon. The attitude of the GPs varies according to their own prejudices. Married men over 30 with kids usually get referred without too much trouble. Younger and single men are quite likely to face a barrage of opposition and they will have to be very determined to stick it out. (In 1970 about 6000 requests for vasectomies in Britain — about 1 in 10 — were turned down because the men were "too young", or hadn't tried hard enough with other contraceptives, or had too few children. Of course doctors shouldn't have that sort of control.) The GP supplies a letter to a consultant surgeon who repeats the same pattern of questions. Some men were not just asked why they wanted a vasectomy but also about their sex life.

There is a positive side to this counselling. A lot of men have fears about loss of potency after the operation, and there is even a confusion between vasectomy and castration. In fact 50 years ago vasectomy was performed on men because it was believed to increase men's sexual vigour. Other men may be worried by the stigma attached to sterilisation because of its connection with Nazi Eugenics programmes. (No less than 14 states in the USA still allow compulsory sterilisation of epileptics, and in 12 states the same provision is included for so-called criminals.) Of course the whole question of voluntary sterilisation as a form of contraception, as a free act of the individual concerned, is quite separate from this sort of State invasion of the rights of the individual.

The GPs often encourage men to have it done privately. At around £25 for a ten minute operation it must be a lucrative business — but it's certainly quicker that way.

The pressure on certain clinics is quite high. The St Helier Hospital, Carshalton, for example, has been doing ten operations a month since they started the service last year. The NHS waiting list in London varies from 6 weeks to 6 months. Privately it is usually done within 2 or 3 weeks, and this must be tempting for men who want to get it over with quickly.

In Eddie's case his GP referred him to the FPA who booked an operating theatre and a surgeon. The local council, Lambeth, picked up the bill. Only some of the other Local Authorities in London provide this service — Camden, Westminster, Haringey and Islington (the ones which provide a free contraception service). The FPA have a list of clinics in Britain (there are 9 in London) where it is possible to get a vasectomy on the NHS.

Once the operation is arranged, husband and wife sign a form giving consent. The operation itself is simple and quick, lasting no more than 10 minutes. Under the local anaesthetic some men feel a bit of pain, but nothing too bad. The surgeon advises the patient to wear a pair of tights under pants, or a jockstrap, to hold the testicles close to

the body to help the healing. Apart from a slightly sore feeling which lasted a day at most, no-one we talked to mentioned any after-effects. One man compared the operation with a visit to the dentist.

We asked the men if they had any doubts or fears about the operation either before or afterwards. Some men said they just put it out of their minds as soon as it was over. (In December 1968 the Simon Population Trust published an investigation into the psychological effects of vasectomy. They interviewed 1012 men living in the UK. Asked, "Would you recommend vasectomy to others placed like yourself?" no less than 98% answered, "Yes.") Eddie said that he did go through a period of feeling resentful about it, feeling that he had put a lot into the marriage and that he was taking all the pressure. But that passed quickly, and now he sees it as the best thing he has ever done, part of a bigger change in his life towards a more open and equal relationship with Linda. He feels that these changes were necessary to make the marriage work and keep them both happy.

No-one mentioned any changes for the worst in their sex lives — Eddie said he actually felt randier if anything, now that there were no worries. Three men mentioned that their semen had changed — it had become clearer and more transparent, and turned to water quickly.

The follow-up to the operation varied from hospital to hospital. One hospital insisted on regular sperm counts and blood tests at 2-week intervals for 3 months after the operation. Another hospital simply asked for one sperm sample after 3 months, then another two in the same period. One or two hadn't bothered with any further checks, though since there are a large number of sperms 'upstream' of the point in the vas that was cut, it takes time to clear them. On average it takes about 10 ejaculations. To make sure that the man is infertile it is necessary for the semen to be examined under a high-power microscope to check that it is sperm free.

Can it be reversed?

GPs and consultants told the men that the operation was irreversible — it made no-one change their minds. In fact, in some cases it can be reversed. It depends to some extent on how the original cut in the vas was made. Over the last four years the Marie Stopes Clinic has attempted the reversal operation (Reanastomosis) in 12 cases. In 9 cases it was successful, and 6 pregnancies have resulted. Research into the possibility of making the operation more surely and easily reversible has gone on recently in India and America. Experiments on dogs, rats and men have been carried out where the vas is not cut but simply clipped shut. This was not very successful. Slightly better (about 90% success rate) was the insertion of a non-absorbable piece of thick surgical thread about 1 centimetre long into the vas to act as a sort of plug. In the cases of failure it was found that the walls of the vas had dilated around the plug. Another method involved filling a section of the vas with a quick hardening plastic. Most ambitious and still in the development stages, is the implantation into the vas of a small channel made of gold and stainless steel. The channel is

surgically fixed in the vas and carries a tap with a tiny head which sticks outside the vas. According to how the tap is turned sperm is blocked or flows through.

In the States the Sperm Bank provides a way of leaving the options open to a man who wants the reliable contraception of sterilisation, but who also wants to father children in the future. It was found that if a man's semen is diluted with glycerol, sealed in a glass vial and frozen in liquid nitrogen, in a number of cases the thawed semen used to inseminate a woman resulted in pregnancy. It is simply unknown at present how effective this method would be if the semen were stored for say 5 years. Nevertheless a man in the States can buy his 'fertility insurance' for a down payment of \$100 and a fridge storage charge of about \$10 a year.

As we've said all the men we talked to were married with children, and it is only within a monogamous relationship that vasectomy relieves the woman of the burden of contraception. Moreover, single men face a lot more opposition if they want the operation. Many single men without children find the irreversibility of vasectomy a problem: there is always the nagging doubt that your life could change and that you might bitterly regret the operation. Perhaps a lot of childless men are worried about the social stigma which could attach to sterilisation. They fear jokes from other men. For different reasons they feel their virility is threatened. Some of these fears may be backward ones — men not wishing to lose ground on their traditionally privileged position with regard to woman — but others may be due to misunderstanding. Some men mistakenly connect vasectomy with a loss of sexual ability.

One single man who had a vasectomy, Bill, does regret it now. When he had the operation he and his wife definitely didn't want any more children. Their marriage broke up and he eventually got into a stable relationship with another woman. Now they feel they would like to have a child together.

This problem won't be solved until vasectomy is safely and surely reversible. Many single men we talked to said they would have a vasectomy if it was reversible. What is maddening is that a reversible vasectomy is perfectly feasible. At the moment the bulk of research money is squandered on ventures like jaunts to the moon, and the big pharmaceutical companies are happy to carry on cashing in on contraception — "there's gold in them thar pills". If all that research, time and money was turned towards vasectomy, in a matter of years it would be possible to have a better form of contraception than any that exists at the moment. □

Useful addresses:

Maria Stopes Clinic, 108 Whitfield Street, London W1 Tel. 388 0662

Family Planning Association (FPA) 27/35 Mortimer Street, London W1 Tel. 636 7866

Books:

Vasectomy and Sterilisation by Clive Wood. Temple Smith, £1.00. A good readable introduction to the whole question of sterilisation.

Vasectomy by International Planned Parenthood Federation (from FPA 30p). For the technical details of the operation.

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34/April 75 Battered women rebuild their lives. Letters criticising 'What happened at Heywood' (Spare Rib 31) with first of two articles in response: 'Women's Employers - General Electric Company'. Checklist of women's music from America. NEWS ABORTION ACT THREAT James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill; list of MPs who voted for its Second Reading. SPARE PARTS Self help herbs.

35/May 75 Communal upbringing in Scotland. GEC women's struggles. New serial: Exercise in Trust - Correspondence between Two Women: a lesbian writer's process of self-discovery guided by a feminist therapist. NEWS Fakenham workers' co-operative. Jean Gardiner: Common Market Referendum. ABORTION ACT THREAT House of Commons Select Committee; list of MPs who voted against Second Reading of White's Bill; West European legislation.

36/June 75 Pain in Childbirth. 'Mouselike': short story about alienated sex. Valium. NEWS Is the government planning to expand child-minding on the cheap? Bradford Gay Liberation organise follow-up to BMA Conference (see Spare Rib 29). ABORTION ACT THREAT What the White Bill would mean if passed; how to take the campaign into your area.



37/July 75 Breast cancer: diagnosis and treatment; personal experience; self-examination. Margaret Walters on Janis Joplin. NEWS Phan Thi Minh interviewed: 'I could talk for half a day about women in Vietnam'. ABORTION ACT THREAT Round-up of National Abortion Campaign activity.

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